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THE STUDENT:
AND
ASMODEUS AT LARGE.

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Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton, 1st
Lytton,
baron, 1803-1873.✓

THE STUDENT

AND

ASMODEUS AT LARGE

BY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON

"The situation of the most enchanted enthusiast is preferable to that of a philosopher who, from continual apprehensions of being mistaken, at length neither dares affirm nor deny any thing."—WEILAND: *Agathon*.

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TO
MY ESTEEMED AND EXCELLENT FRIEND,
COLONEL D'AGUILAR,
ETC., ETC.,

I Dedicate this Work,

E. L. BULWER.

HERTFORD STREET,
April 20, 1835.

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JUL 30 1836

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PREFATORY NOTE TO THE KNEBWORTH EDITION.

FOR a year and eight months—beginning with the January of 1832, and ending with the August of 1833—Lord Lytton, then Mr. Edward Bulwer, M.P. for the City of Lincoln, was the Editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*. During that time he wrote more largely for its pages than any other contributor. A selection from the papers thus produced was published, in 1835, in two volumes, under the title of “*The Student*.” The *Essays and Minor Tales*, which were therein for the first time brought together, were brought to a close by a series of articles, the first of which appeared in the *New Monthly*, more than a year before the Author had undertaken its Editorship. This was “*The New Phædo*,” the earliest instalment of which had been issued in the *Magazine* for the December of 1830. From its original heading, “*Conversations with an Ambitious Student in Ill-health*,” the title of the whole collection was immediately derived.

Another series of papers, contributed anonymously to the *New Monthly* by Lord Lytton, during the period of his Editorship, was almost directly after its completion in 1833, reprinted (with its author's name upon the title-page) in Philadelphia. It is here presented to the English reader for the first time in a collective form, on this side of the Atlantic. A fragmentary portion of this series, the “*Tale of Kosem Kesamim, the Magician*,” was included among the contents of the original edition of “*The Student*.” That narrative is now restored to its right position as an integral part of “*Asmodeus at Large*.” It will be none the less interesting to the readers of the two works comprised within the present volume, from the circumstance of its having curiously foreshadowed, nearly forty years before the publication of “*The Coming Race*,” the Author's dream of a subterranean world.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

I PRESENT these papers to the reader with considerable diffidence, and with the full consciousness that they need an apology. A series of articles which I published some time since in the "New Monthly Magazine," under the title of "Conversations with an Ambitious Student," attracted much favourable attention; and I have been often earnestly requested to collect and republish them. I postponed, however, doing so, from time to time, in the impression that their grave and serious character was not likely to command an attentive audience with the many, at all commensurate with the exaggerated and enthusiastic estimate already conceived of their value by the few. At length, deciding to publish certain Essays and Tales, I found that their general train of thought was so much in harmony with the Conversations referred to, that I resolved to incorporate the latter, (corrected, somewhat enlarged, and under the altered denomination of "The New Phædo,")—leaving them at the end of the collection—to be read or avoided, as the inclination of the reader may prompt him;—a sort of supplementary walk in the enclosure, at which he may stop short, or through which he may pursue his wanderings, in proportion as the preliminary excursion may have allured or fatigued him.

Of the general nature both of these Conversations and the various papers which precede them (some of which have also appeared before), I should observe that they belong rather to the poetical than the logical philosophy—that, for the most part, they address the sentiment rather than the intellect—choosing for their materials the metaphysics of the heart and the passions, which are more often employed in the Fiction than the Essay. If the title were not a little equivocal and somewhat presumptuous, I should venture to entitle them "Minor Prose Poems;" they utter in prose,

what are the ordinary didactics of poetry. I allow that they must therefore be taken *cum grano*—that they assert rather than prove, and that they address themselves more to those prepared to agree with the views they embrace, than to those whom it would be necessary to convert. This is yet more the case, perhaps, with the Essays than the Tales, in which latter the moral is often more homely—more addressed to the experience of the reason, and less constructed from the subtleties and refinements of the feelings. The Tales, in short, partake as much of the nature of the essay as the Essays themselves—availing themselves of a dramatic shape, the more earnestly and the less tediously to inculcate truths.

However desultory and various the topics of these papers may appear, I yet trust that they have been so selected and arranged as to form a tolerable symmetrical whole—each tending to maintain an unity of purpose, and to illustrate one general vein of ethical sentiment and belief.

E. L. B.

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THE STUDENT.

ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AUTHORS

AND THE IMPRESSION CONVEYED OF THEM BY THEIR WORKS.

THIS is one of those subtle and delicate subjects which Literary Philosophers have not taken the trouble to discuss; it is one which is linked with two popular errors. The first error is in the assertion that Authors are different from the idea of them which their writings tend to convey; and the second error is in the expectation that nevertheless Authors ought to be exactly what their readers choose to imagine them. The world does thus, in regard to Authors, as it does in other matters—expresses its opinions in order to contrast its expectations. But if an Author disappoint the herd of spectators, it does not follow that it is his fault. The mass of men are disappointed with the Elgin Marbles. Why? Because they are like life—because they are natural. Their disappointment in being brought into contact with a man of genius is of the same sort. He is too natural for them,—they expected to see his style in his clothes. Mankind love to be cheated: thus the men of genius who have not disappointed the world in their externals, and in what I shall term *the management of self*, have always played a part,—they have kept alive the vulgar wonder by tricks suited to the vulgar understanding,—they have measured their conduct by device and artifice,—and have walked the paths of life in the garments of the stage. Thus did Pythagoras and Diogenes,—thus did Napoleon and Louis XIV. (the last of whom was a man of genius, if only from the delicate beauty of his compliments),—thus

did Bolingbroke and Chatham (who never spoke except in his best wig, as being the more imposing),—and, above all Englishmen, thus did Lord Byron. These last three are men eminently interesting to the vulgar, not so much from their genius as their *charlatanism*. It requires a more muscular mind than ordinary to recover the shock of finding a great man simple. There are some wise lines in “The Corsair,” the peculiar merit of which I never recollect that any of the million critics of that poem discovered :—

“He bounds—he flies—until his footsteps reach
The spot where ends the cliff, begins the beach,
There checks his speed ; but pauses less to breathe
The breezy freshness of the deep beneath,
Than there his wonted statelier step renew ;
Nor rush, disturb'd by haste, to vulgar view ;
For well had Conrad learn'd to curb the crowd,
By arts that veil and oft preserve the proud :
His was the lofty port, the distant mien,
That seems to shun the sight, and awes if seen :
The solemn aspect, and the high-born eye,
That checks low mirth, but lacks not courtesy.”

In these lines—shrewd and worldly to the very marrow—are depicted the tricks which Chiefs have ever been taught to play, but which Literary men (Chiefs of a different order) have not learned to perform. Hence their simplicity,—hence their vulgar disappointment. No man was disappointed with the late Lord Londonderry, but many were with Walter Scott ; none with Charles X.—many with Paul Courier ; none with the late Archbishop of * * * *—many with Robert Burns. Massillon preserved in the court the impression he made in the pulpit : he dressed alike his melodious style and his handsome person to the best advantage. Massillon was a good man, but he was a quack ; it was his vocation,—for he was also a good courtier.

This, then, is the difference between the great men of letters and the great men of courts : the former generally disappoint the vulgar—the latter exceed their expectations ; because the one class are bred up in the arts that hide defects and dazzle the herd, and the other know nothing but knowledge, and are skilled in no arts save those of composition. It follows then, that the feeling of disappointment is usually a sign of a weak mind in him who experiences it,—a foolish, apprentice-sort of disposition, that judges of everything great by the criterion of a puppet-show, and expects as much out of the common way in a

celebrated author as in the lord mayor's coach. I hear, therefore, the common cry, that a great man does not answer expectation, with a certain distrustful scorn of the persons who utter it. What right have they to judge of the matter at all? Send them to see Gog and Magog: they will not be disappointed with *that* sight. Is it not, in fact, a great presumption in the petty herd of idlers to express an opinion of the man, when they can scarcely do so of his works, which are but a part of him? Men who knew not, nor could have known, a line in the "*Principia*," thought themselves perfectly at liberty to say that Sir Isaac Newton was quite a different man from what might have been expected. There is scarcely a good critic of books born in an age, and yet every fool thinks himself justified in criticising persons. "There are some people," said Necker, in one of his fragments, "who talk of *our* Pascal—*our* Corneille. I am thunderstruck at their familiarity!"

In real truth, I believe that there is much less difference between the author and his works than is currently supposed; it is usually in the *physical appearance* of the writer,—his manners,—his mien,—his exterior,—that he falls short of the ideal a reasonable man forms of him—rarely in his mind. A man is, I suspect, but of a second-rate order whose genius is not immeasurably above his works,—who does not feel within him an inexhaustible affluence of thoughts, feelings, inventions, which he will never have leisure to embody in print. He will die, and leave only a thousandth part of his wealth to Posterity, which is his heir. I believe this to be true, even of persons like La Fontaine, who succeed only in a particular line; men, seemingly of one idea, shining through an atmosphere of simplicity—the Monomaniacs of Genius. But it is doubly true of the mass of great Authors who are mostly various, accomplished, and all-attempting: such men never can perfect their own numberless conceptions.

It is, then, in the physical or conventional, not the mental qualities, that an Author usually falls short of our ideal: this is a point worthy to be fixed in the recollection. Any of my readers who have studied the biography of men of letters will allow my assertion is borne out by facts; and, at this moment, I am quite sure that numbers, even of both sexes, have lost a portion of interest for the genius of

Byron on reading in Lady Blessington's "Journal" that he wore a nankeen jacket and green spectacles. Of such a nature are such disappointments. No! in the mind of a man there is always a resemblance to his works. His heroes may not be like himself, but they are like certain qualities which belong to him. The sentiments he utters are his at the moment;—if you find them predominate in all his works, they predominate in his mind: if they are advanced in one, but contradicted in another, they still resemble their Author, and betray the want of depth or of resolution in his mind. His works alone make not up a man's character, but they are the index to that living book.

Every one knows how well Voltaire refuted the assertion of J. Baptiste Rousseau, that goodness and talent must exist together. An ancient writer, holding the same error as J. Baptiste Rousseau, says that there cannot be "a good poet who is not first a good man."* This is a paradox, and yet it is not *far* from the truth: a good poet may not be a good man, but he must have certain good dispositions. Above all, that disposition which sympathises with noble sentiments—with lofty actions—with the beauty of the mind as of the earth. This may not suffice to make him a good man—its influence may be counteracted a hundred ways in life, but it is not counteracted in his compositions. *There* the better portion of his Intellect awakes—there he gives vent to enthusiasm, and enthusiasm to generous and warm emotions. Sterne may have been harsh in his conduct, but his heart was tender at the moment he wrote of Maria. Harshness of conduct is not a contradiction of extreme susceptibility to sentiment in writing. The latter may be perfectly sincere, as the former may be perfectly indefensible; in fact, the one may be a consequence, not a contradiction, of the other. The craving after the Ideal, which belongs to Sentiment, makes its possessor discontented with the mortals around him, and the very overfinesse of nerve that quickens his feelings, sharpens also his irritability. For my own part, so far from being surprised to hear that Sterne was a peevish and angry man, I should have presumed it at once from the overwrought fibre of his graver compositions. This contrast between softness in emotion, and callousness in conduct, is not peculiar to poets. Nero was womanishly affected by the harp; and

* Strabo, lib. i.

we are told by Plutarch that Alexander Phœæus, who was one of the sternest of tyrants, shed a torrent of tears upon the acting of a play. So that he who had furnished the most matter for tragedies, was most affected by the pathos of a tragedy!

But who shall say that *the feelings* which produced such emotions, even in such men, were not laudable and good? Who that has stood in the dark caverns of the Human Heart, shall dare to scoff at the contrast of act and sentiment, instead of lamenting it? Such scoffers are the Shallows of Wit—their very cleverness proves their superficiality. There are various dark feelings within us which do not *destroy*, but which, when roused, *overwhelm* for the time the feelings which are good—to which last, occupied in literature, or in purely mental emotions, we are sensible alone, and unalloyed. Of our evil feelings, there is one in especial which is the usual characteristic of morbid literary men, though, hitherto, it has escaped notice as such, and which is the cause of many of the worst faults to be found both in the Author and the Tyrant: this feeling is *Suspicion*; and I think I am justified in calling it the characteristic of morbid literary men. Their quick susceptibilities make them over-sensible of injury, they exaggerate the enmities they have awakened—the slanders they have incurred. They are ever fearful of a trap: nor this in literature alone. Knowing that they are not adepts in the world's common business, they are perpetually afraid of *being taken in*: and, feeling their various peculiarities, they are often equally afraid of being ridiculed. Thus Suspicion, in all ways, and all shapes, besets them; this makes them now afraid to be generous, and now to be kind; and acting upon a soil that easily receives, but rarely loses an impression, that melancholy vice soon obdures and encrusts the whole conduct of the *acting* man. But in literary composition it sleeps. The *thinking* man then hath no enemy at his desk,—no hungry trader at his elbow,—no grinning spy on his uncouth gestures. His soul is young again—he is what he embodies; and the feelings, checked in the real world, obtain their vent in the imaginary. It was the *Good Natural*, to borrow a phrase from the French, that spoke in the erring Rousseau, when he dwelt on the loveliness of Virtue. It was the Good Natural that stirred in the mind of Alexander Phœæus when he wept at the mimic sorrows sub-

jected to his gaze. When the time for action and for the real world arrived to either, it roused other passions, and Suspicion made the Author no less a wretch than it made the Tyrant.

Thus the tenderest sentiments may be accompanied with cruel actions, and yet the solution of the enigma be easy to the inquirer; and thus, though the *life* of an Author does not correspond with his works, his *nature* may.

But this view is the most partial of all,—and I have, therefore, considered it the first. How few instances there are, after all, of even that *seeming* discrepancy, which I have just touched upon, between the Author's conduct and his books; in most they chime together—and all the notes from the mighty instrument are in concord! Look at the life of Schiller, how completely his works assimilate with his restless, questioning, and daring genius: the animation of Fiesco, the solemnity of Wallenstein, are alike emblematic of his character. His sentiments are the echo to his life. Walter Scott and Cobbett—what a contrast! Could Cobbett's life have been that of Scott—or Scott's character that of Cobbett? You may read the character of the Authors in their several works, as if the works were meant to be autobiographies. Warburton!—what an illustration of “the proud and bitter bishop,” in his proud and bitter books! Sir Philip Sidney* is the Arcadia put into action;—the wise and benevolent Fénelon;—the sententious and fiery Corneille;—the dreaming and scarce intelligible Shelley—are not their works mirrors of their own natures? The pompous vigour of Johnson, with his prejudice and his sense—his jealousies and his charity—his habitual magniloquence in nothings—and his gloomy independence of mind, yet low-born veneration for rank;—Johnson is no less visible in the “Rambler,” in “Rasselas,” in the “Lives of the Poets,” in “Taxation no Tyranny,” than in his large chair at Mrs. Thrale's—his lonely chamber in the dark court out of Fleet Street—or his leonine unbendings with the canicular soul of Boswell. I might go on enumerating these instances for ever:—Dante, Petrarch, Voltaire, rush on my memory as I write,—but to name them is enough to remind the reader that if he would learn their characters, he has only to read their works. I have

* “Poetry put into action” is the fine saying of Campbell as applied to Sidney's life;—true, but the poetry of the “Arcadia.”

been much pleased in tracing the life of Paul Louis Courier, the most brilliant political writer France ever possessed—to see how singularly it is in keeping with the character of his writings. Talking the other day at Paris with some of his friends, they expressed themselves astonished at my accurate notions of his character—"You must have known him," they said. "No;—but I know his works." When he was in the army in Italy, he did not distinguish himself by bravery in his profession of soldier, but by bravery in his pursuits as an antiquarian! Perfectly careless of danger, he pursued his own independent line of occupation—sympathising with none of the objects of others—untouched by the vulgar ambition—wandering alone over the remains of old—falling a hundred times into the hands of the *brigands*, and a hundred times extricating himself by his address, and continuing the same pursuits with the same nonchalance. In all this you see the identical character which, in his writings, views with a gay contempt the ambition and schemes of others—which sneers alike at the Bourbon and the Buonaparte—which, careless of subordination, rather than braving persecution, pursues with a gallant indifference its own singular and independent career.

A critic, commenting on writings that have acquired some popularity, observed, that they contained two views of life, contradictory of each other,—the one inclining to the Ideal and Lofty, the other to the Worldly and Cynical. The critic remarked, that "this might arise from the Author having two separate characters,—a circumstance less uncommon than the world supposed." There is great depth in the critic's observation. An Author usually *has* two characters,—the one belonging to his Imagination—the other to his Experience. From the one come all his higher embodyings: by the help of the one he elevates—he refines; from the other come his beings of "the earth, earthy," and his aphorisms of worldly caution. From the one broke—bright, yet scarce distinct—the Rebecca of "Ivanhoe,"—from the other rose, shrewd and selfish, the Andrew Fairservice of "Rob Roy." The original of the first need never to have existed—her elements belonged to the Ideal; but the latter was purely the creature of Experience, and either copied from one, or moulded unconsciously from several, of the actual denizens of the

living world. In Shakspeare the same doubleness of character is remarkably visible. The loftiest Ideal is perpetually linked with the most exact copy of the commoners of life. Shakspeare had never seen Miranda—but he had drunk his glass with honest Stephano. Each character embodies a separate view of life—the one (to return to my proposition) the offspring of Imagination, the other of Experience. This complexity of character—which has often puzzled the inquirer—may, I think, thus be easily explained—and the seeming contradiction of the tendency of the work traced home to the conflicting principles in the breast of the Writer. The more a man of imagination sees of the world, the more likely to be prominent is the distinction I have noted.

I cannot leave this subject—though the following remark is an episode from the inquiry indicated by my title—without observing that the characters drawn by Experience—usually the worldly, the plain, and the humorous—stand necessarily out from the canvas in broader and more startling colours, than those created by the Imagination. Hence superficial critics have often considered the humorous and coarse characters of an author as his best,—forgetful that the very indistinctness of his ideal characters is not only inseparable from the nature of purely imaginary creations, but a proof of the exaltation and intenseness of the imaginative power. The most shadowy and mistlike of all Scott's heroes is the Master of Ravenswood, and yet it is perhaps the highest of his characters in execution as well as conception. Those strong colours and bold outlines, which strike the vulgar gaze as belonging to the best pictures, belong rather to the lower Schools of Art. Let us take a work—the greatest the world possesses in those schools, and in which the flesh-and-blood vitality of the characters is especially marked—I mean "Tom Jones"—and compare it with "Hamlet." The chief characters in "Tom Jones" are all plain, visible, eating, drinking, and walking beings; those in "Hamlet" are shadowy, solemn, and mysterious: we do not associate them with the ordinary wants and avocations of earth; they are

"Lifeless, but lifelike, and awful to sight,
Like the figures in arras that gloomily glare,
Stirr'd by the breath of the midnight air."

But who shall say that the characters in "Tom Jones" are better drawn than those in "Hamlet;" or that there is greater skill necessary in the highest walk of the Actual School, than in that of the Imaginative? Yet there are some persons who, secretly in their hearts, want Hamlet to be as large in the calves as Tom Jones! These are they who blame "Lara" for being indistinct—that very indistinctness shedding over the poem the sole interest it was capable of receiving. With such critics, *Maritimes* is a more masterly creation than *Undine*.

We may observe in Humorous Authors that the faults they chiefly ridicule have often a likeness in themselves. Cervantes had much of the knight-errant in him;—Sir George Etherege was unconsciously the Fopling Flutter of his own satire;—Goldsmith was the same hero to chambermaids, and coward to ladies, that he has immortalised in his charming comedy;—and the antiquarian frivolities of Jonathan Oldbuck had their resemblance in Jonathan Oldbuck's creator. The pleasure or the pain we derive from our own foibles makes enough of our nature to come off somewhere or another in the impresson we stamp of ourselves on Books.

There is—as I think it has been somewhere remarked by a French writer—there is that in our character which never can be seen except in our writings. Yes, all that we have formed from the Ideal—all our noble aspirings—our haunting visions—our dreams of virtue,—all the *celata Venus* which dwells in the lonely Ida of the heart—who could pour forth these delicate mysteries to gross and palpable hearers,—who could utterly unveil to an actual and indifferent spectator the cherished and revered images of years—dim regrets and vague hopes?

In fact, if you told your best friend half what you put upon paper, he would yawn in your face, or he would think you a fool. Would it have been possible for Rousseau to have gravely communicated to a living being the tearful egotisms of his "Reveries?"—Could Shakspeare have uttered the wild confessions of his sonnets to his friends at the Mermaid?—Should we have any notion of the youthful character of Milton—its lustrous but crystallised purity—if the "Comus" had been unwritten? *Authors are the only men we ever really do know,—the rest of mankind die with only the surface of their character*

understood. True, as I have before said, even in an Author, if of large and fertile mind, much of his most sacred self is never to be revealed,—but still we know what species of ore the mine would have produced, though we may not have exhausted its treasure.

Thus, then, to sum up what I have said, so far from there being truth in the vulgar notion that the character of Authors is belied in their works, their works are, to a diligent inquirer, their clearest and fullest illustration—an appendix to their biography far more valuable and explanatory than the text itself. From this fact, we may judge of the beauty and grandeur of the materials of the human mind, although those materials are so often perverted, and their harmony so fearfully marred. It also appears that, despite the real likeness between the book and the man, the vulgar will not fail to be disappointed, because they look to externals; and the man composed not the book with his face, nor his dress, nor his manners, but with his mind. Hence, then, to proclaim yourself disappointed with the Author is usually to condemn your own accuracy of judgment, and your own secret craving after pantomimic effect. Moreover, it would appear, on looking over these remarks, that there are often two characters to an Author,—the one essentially drawn from the Poetry of life, the other from its Experience; and that hence are to be explained many seeming contradictions and inconsistencies in his works. Lastly, that so far from the book belying the author, unless he had written that book, you—(no, even if you are his nearest relation, his dearest connexion—his wife—his mother)—would never have known the character of his mind.

“Hæ pulcherrimæ effigies et mansuræ.” *

All biography proves this remarkable fact! Who so astonished as a man's relations when he has exhibited his *genius*, which is the soul and core of his *character*? Had Alfieri or Rousseau died at thirty, what would all who had personally known either have told us of them? Would they have given us any, the faintest, notion of their characters?—None. A man's mind is betrayed by his talents as much as by his virtues. A Councillor of a

* [These most beautiful and enduring images.]

Provincial Parliament had a brother a mathematician;—
“How unworthy in my brother,” cried the Councillor;
“the brother of a councillor of the Parliament in Bretagne,
to sink into a mathematician!” That mathematician was
Descartes! What should we know of the character of
Descartes, supposing him to have renounced his science,
and his brother (who might fairly be supposed to know
his life and character better than any one else) to have
written his biography?—A reflection that may teach us
how biography in general ought to be estimated.

MONOS AND DAIMONOS.

A LEGEND.

I AM English by birth, but my early years were passed in a foreign and more northern land. I had neither brothers nor sisters ; my mother died when I was in the cradle ; and I found my sole companion, tutor, and playmate in my father. He was a younger brother of a noble and ancient house : what induced him to forsake his country and his friends, to abjure all society, and to live on a rock is a story in itself, which has nothing to do with mine.

I said my father lived on a rock—the whole country round seemed nothing but rock!—wastes, bleak, blank, dreary ; trees stunted, herbage blighted ; caverns, through which some black and wild stream (that never knew star or sunlight, but through rare and hideous chasms of the huge stones above it) went dashing and howling on its blessed course ; vast cliffs, covered with eternal snows, where the birds of prey lived, and sent, in screams and discordance, a grateful and meet music to the heavens, which seemed too cold and barren to wear even clouds upon their wan, grey, comfortless expanse : these made the character of that country where the spring of my life sickened itself away. The climate which, in the milder parts of * * * *, relieves the nine months of winter with three months of an abrupt and autumnless summer, never seemed to vary in the gentle and sweet region in which *my* home was placed. Perhaps, for a brief interval, the snow in the valleys melted, and the streams swelled, and a blue, ghastly, unnatural kind of vegetation, seemed here and there to scatter a grim smile over minute particles of the universal rock ; but to these witnesses of the changing season were the summers of my boyhood confined. My father was addicted to the sciences—the physical sciences—and possessed but a moderate share of learning in anything else ; he taught me all he knew ; and the rest of my education, Nature, in a savage

and stern guise, instilled into my heart by silent but deep lessons. She taught my feet to bound, and my arm to smite; she breathed life into my passions, and shed darkness over my temper; she taught me to cling to her, even in her most rugged and unalluring form, and to shrink from all else—from the companionship of man, and the soft smiles of woman, and the shrill voice of childhood; and the ties, and hopes, and social gaieties of existence, as from a torture and a curse. Even in that sullen rock, and beneath that ungenial sky, I had luxuries unknown to the palled tastes of cities, or to those who woo delight in an air of odours and in a land of roses! What were those luxuries? They had a myriad varieties and shades of enjoyment—they had but a common name. What were those luxuries?—*Solitude!*

My father died when I was eighteen; I was transferred to my uncle's protection, and I repaired to London. I arrived there, gaunt and stern, a giant in limbs and strength, and, to the judgment of those about me, a savage in mood and bearing. They would have laughed, but I awed them; they would have altered *me*, but I changed *them*; I threw a damp over their enjoyments. Though I said little, though I sat with them estranged, and silent, and passive, they seemed to wither beneath my presence. Nobody could live with me and be happy, or at ease! I felt it, and I hated them that they could not love me. Three years passed—I was of age—I demanded my fortune—and scorning social life, and pining once more for loneliness, I resolved to journey to those unpeopled and far lands, which if any have pierced, none have returned to describe. So I took my leave of them all, cousin and aunt—and when I came to my old uncle, who had loved me less than any, I grasped his hand with so friendly a gripe, that, well I ween, the dainty and nice member was thenceforth but little inclined to its ordinary functions.

I commenced my pilgrimage—I pierced the burning sands—I traversed the vast deserts—I came into the enormous woods of Africa, where human step never trod, nor human voice ever startled the thrilling and intense solemnity that broods over the great solitudes, as it brooded over chaos before the world was! There the primeval nature springs and perishes, undisturbed and unvaried by the convulsions of the surrounding world; the seed becomes

the tree, lives through its uncounted ages, falls and moulders, and rots and vanishes: there the slow Time moves on, unwitnessed in its mighty and mute changes, save by the wandering lion, or that huge serpent—a hundred times more vast than the puny boa—which travellers have boasted to behold. There, too, as beneath the heavy and dense shade I couched in the scorching noon, I heard the trampling as of an army, and the crush and fall of the strong trees, and saw through the matted boughs the Behemoth pass on its terrible way, with its eyes burning as a sun, and its white teeth arched and glistening in the rabid jaw, as pillars of spar glitter in a cavern: the monster, to whom those wastes only are a home, and who never, since the waters rolled from the Dædal earth, has been given to human gaze and wonder but my own! Seasons glided on, but I counted them not; they were not doled to me by the tokens of man, nor made sick to me by the changes of his base life, and the evidence of his sordid labour. Seasons glided on, and my youth ripened into manhood, and manhood grew grey with the first frost of age; and then a vague and restless spirit fell upon me, and I said in my foolish heart, “I will look upon the countenances of my race once more!” I retraced my steps—I re-crossed the wastes—I re-entered the cities—I resumed the garb of man; for I had been hitherto naked in the wilderness, and hair had grown over me as a garment. I repaired to a seaport, and took ship for England.

In the vessel there was one man, and only one, who neither avoided my companionship nor recoiled at my frown. He was an idle and curious being, full of the frivolities, and egotisms, and importance of those to whom towns are homes, and talk has become a mental aliment. He was one pervading, irritating, offensive tissue of little and low thoughts. The only meanness he had not was fear. It was impossible to awe, to silence, or to shun him. He sought me for ever; he was as a blister to me, which no force could tear away; my soul grew faint when my eyes met him. He was to my sight as those creatures which, from their very loathsomeness, are fearful as well as despicable to us. I longed and yearned to strangle him when he addressed me! Often I would have laid my hand on him, and hurled him into the sea to the sharks, which, lynx-eyed and eager-jawed, swam night and day around our

ship; but the gaze of many was on us, and I curbed myself, and turned away, and shut my eyes in very sickness; and when I opened them again, lo! he was by my side, and his sharp quick voice grated on my loathing ear! One night I was roused from my sleep by the screams and oaths of men, and I hastened on deck: we had struck upon a rock. It was a ghastly, but a glorious sight! Moonlight still and calm—the sea sleeping in sapphires; and in the midst of the silent and soft repose of all things, three hundred and fifty souls were to perish from the world! I sat apart, and looked on, and aided not. A voice crept like an adder's hiss into my ear; I turned, and saw my tormentor; the moonlight fell on his face, and it grinned with the maudlin grin of intoxication, and his pale blue eye glistened, and he said, "We will not part even here!" My blood ran coldly through my veins, and I would have thrown him into the sea, which now came fast and fast upon us; but the moonlight was on him, and I did not dare to kill him. But I would not stay to perish with the herd, and I threw myself alone from the vessel and swam towards a rock. I saw a shark dart after me, but I shunned him, and the moment after he had plenty to sate his maw. I heard a crash, and a mingled and wild burst of anguish,—the anguish of three hundred and fifty hearts that a minute afterwards were stilled, and I said in my *own* heart, with a deep joy, "*His* voice is with the rest, and we *have* parted!" I gained the shore, and lay down to sleep.

The next morning my eyes opened upon a land more beautiful than a young man's dreams. The sun had just risen, and laughed over streams of silver, and trees bending with golden and purple fruits, and the diamond dew sparkled from a sod covered with flowers, whose faintest breath was a delight. Ten thousand birds, with all the hues of a northern rainbow blended in their glorious and glowing wings, rose from turf and tree, and loaded the air with melody and gladness; the sea, without a vestige of the past destruction upon its glassy brow, murmured at my feet; the heavens, without a cloud, and bathed in a liquid and radiant light, sent their breezes as a blessing to my cheek. I rose with a refreshed and light heart; I traversed the new home I had found: I climbed a hill, and saw that I was in a small island; it had no trace of man, and my heart swelled as I gazed around and cried aloud in my

exultation, "I shall be alone again!" I descended the hill: I had not yet reached its foot, when I saw the figure of a man approaching towards me. I looked at him, and my heart misgave me. He drew nearer, and I saw that my despicable persecutor had escaped the waters, and now stood before me. He came up with his hideous grin and his twinkling eye; and he flung his arms round me—I would sooner have felt the slimy folds of the serpent—and said, with his grating and harsh voice, "Ha! ha! my friend, we shall be together still!" I looked at him with a grim brow, but I said not a word. There was a great cave by the shore, and I walked down and entered it, and the man followed me. "We shall live so happily here," said he; "we will never separate!" And my lip trembled, and my hand clenched of its own accord. It was now noon, and hunger came upon me; I went forth and killed a deer, and I brought it home and broiled part of it on a fire of fragrant wood; and the man ate, and crunched, and laughed, and I wished that the bones had choked him; and he said, when we had done, "We shall have rare cheer here!" But I still held my peace. At last he stretched himself in a corner of the cave and slept. I looked at him, and saw that the slumber was heavy; and I went out and rolled a huge stone to the mouth of the cavern, and took my way to the opposite part of the island;—it was my turn to laugh then! I found out another cavern; and I made a bed of moss and of leaves, and I wrought a table of wood, and I looked out from the mouth of the cavern and saw the wide seas before me, and I said, "Now I shall be alone!"

When the next day came, I again went out and caught a kid, and brought it in, and prepared it as before; but I was not hungered and I could not eat, so I roamed forth and wandered over the island: the sun had nearly set when I returned. I entered the cavern, and sitting on my bed and by my table was that man whom I thought I had left buried alive in the other cave. He laughed when he saw me, and laid down the bone he was gnawing.

"Ha, ha!" said he, "you would have served me a rare trick; but there was a hole in the cave which you did not see, and I got out to seek you. It was not a difficult matter, for the island is so small; and now we *have* met, and we will part no more!"

I said to the man, "Rise and follow me!" So he

rose, and the food he quitted was loathsome in my eyes, for he had touched it. "Shall this thing reap and I sow?" thought I; and my heart felt to me like iron.

I ascended a tall cliff. "Look round," said I; "you see that stream which divides the island; you shall dwell on one side, and I on the other: but the same spot shall not hold us, nor the same feast supply!"

"That may never be!" quoth the man; "for I cannot catch the deer, nor spring upon the mountain kid; and if you feed me not I shall starve!"

"Are there not fruits," said I, "and birds that you may snare, and fishes which the sea throws up?"

"But I like them not," quoth the man, and laughed, "so well as the flesh of kids and deer!"

"Look, then," said I, "look! by that grey stone, upon the opposite side of the stream, I will lay a deer or a kid daily, so that you may have the food you covet; but if ever you cross the stream and come into my kingdom, so sure as the sea murmurs, and the bird flies, I will slay you!"

I descended the cliff, and led the man to the side of the stream. "I cannot swim," said he; so I took him on my shoulders and crossed the brook, and I found him out a cave, and I made him a bed and a table like my own, and left him. When I was on my own side of the stream again, I bounded with joy, and lifted up my voice; "I shall be alone *now*!" said I.

So two days passed, and I *was* alone. On the third I went after my prey; the noon was hot, and I was wearied when I returned. I entered my cavern, and, behold, the man lay stretched upon my bed. "Ha, ha!" said he, "here I am; I was so lonely at home that I have come to live with you again!"

I frowned on the man with a dark brow, and I said, "So sure as the sea murmurs, and the bird flies, I will slay you!" I seized him in my arms; I plucked him from my bed; I took him out into the open air, and we stood together on the smooth sand and by the great sea. A fear came suddenly upon me: I was struck with the awe of the still Spirit which reigns over Solitude. Had a thousand been round us, I would have slain him before them all. I feared now because we were alone in the desert, with Silence and God! I relaxed my hold. "Swear," I said,

"never to molest me again; swear to preserve unpassed the boundary of our several homes, and I will *not* kill you!" "I cannot swear," answered the man; "I would sooner die than forswear the blessed human face,—even though that face be my enemy's!"

At these words my rage returned; I dashed the man to the ground, and I put my foot upon his breast, and my hand upon his neck, and he struggled for a moment—and was dead! I was startled; and as I looked upon his face I thought he seemed to revive; I thought the cold blue eye fixed upon me, and the vile grin returned to the livid mouth, and the hands which in the death-pang had grasped the sand, stretched themselves out to me. So I stamped on the breast again, and I dug a hole in the shore, and I buried the body. "And now," said I, "I am alone at last!" And then the *TRUE sense of loneliness*, the vague, comfortless, objectless sense of desolation passed into me. And I shook—shook in every limb of my giant frame, as if I had been a child that trembles in the dark; and my hair rose, and my flesh crept, and I would not have stayed in that spot a moment more if I had been made young again for it. I turned away and fled—fled round the whole island; and gnashed my teeth when I came to the sea, and longed to be cast into some illimitable desert, that I might flee on for ever. At sunset I returned to my cave; I sat myself down on one corner of the bed, and covered my face with my hands; I thought I heard a noise; I raised my eyes, and, as I live, I saw on the other end of the bed the man whom I had slain and buried. There he sat, six feet from me, and nodded to me, and looked at me with his wan eyes, and laughed. I rushed from the cave—I entered a wood—I threw myself down—there, opposite to me, six feet from my face, was the face of that man again! And my courage rose, and I spoke, but he answered not. I attempted to seize him, he glided from my grasp, and was still opposite, six feet from me as before. I flung myself on the ground, and pressed my face to the sod, and would not look up till the night came on, and darkness was over the earth. I then rose and returned to the cave; I lay down on my bed, and the man lay down by me; and I frowned, and tried to seize him as before, but I could not, and I closed my eyes, *and the man lay by me.* Day followed day and it was the

same. At board, at bed, at home and abroad, in my uprising and my downsitting, by day and at night,—there, by my bedside, six feet from me, and no more, was that ghastly and dead thing. And I said, as I looked upon the beautiful land and the still heavens, and then turned to that fearful comrade, “I shall never be alone again!” And the man laughed.

At last a ship came, and I hailed it; it took me up, and I thought, as I put my foot upon the deck, “I shall escape from my tormentor!” As I thought so, I saw him climb the deck too, and I strove to push him down into the sea, but in vain; he was by my side, *and he fed and slept with me as before!* I came home to my native land. I forced myself into crowds—I went to the feast, and I heard music; and I made thirty men sit with me, and watch by day and by night. So I had thirty-one companions, and one was more social than all the rest.

At last I said to myself, “This is a delusion, and a cheat of the external senses, and the thing is *not*, save in my mind. I will consult those skilled in such disorders, and I will be—*alone again!*”

I summoned one celebrated in purging from the mind's eye its films and deceits—I bound him by an oath to secrecy—and I told him my tale. He was a bold man and a learned, and promised me relief and release.

“Where is the figure now?” said he, smiling; “I see it not.”

And I answered, “It is six feet from us!”

“I see it not,” said he again; “and if it were real, my senses would not receive the image less palpably than yours.” And he spoke to me as schoolmen speak. I did not argue nor reply, but I ordered the servants to prepare a room, and to cover the floor with a thick layer of sand. When it was done, I bade the leech follow me into the room, and I barred the door. “Where is the figure now?” repeated he: and I said, “Six feet from us as before!” And the leech smiled. “Look on the floor!” said I, and I pointed to the spot; “what see you?” and the leech shuddered, and clung to me that he might not fall. “The sand there,” said he, “was smooth when we entered; and now I see on that spot the print of human feet!”

And I laughed, and dragged my *living* companion on. “See,” said I, “where we move what follows us!”

The leech gasped for breath: "The print," said he, "of those human feet!"

"Can you not minister to me then?" cried I, in a sudden and fierce agony; "and must I *never* be alone again?"

And I saw the feet of the dead thing trace these words upon the sand:—

"SOLITUDE IS ONLY FOR THE GUILTLESS—EVIL THOUGHTS ARE COMPANIONS FOR A TIME—EVIL DEEDS ARE COMPANIONS THROUGH ETERNITY—THY HATRED MADE ME BREAK UPON THY LONELINESS—THY CRIME DESTROYS LONELINESS FOR EVER!"

ON THE DEPARTURE OF YOUTH.

IN the seven stages of man's life there are three epochs more distinctly marked than the rest, viz. the departure of Boyhood—the departure of Youth—the commencement of Old Age. I consider the several dates of these epochs, in ordinary constitutions, to commence at fifteen, thirty, and fifty years of age. It is of the second that I am about to treat. When I call it the epoch for the departure of youth, I do not of course intend to signify that this, the prime and zenith of our years, is as yet susceptible of decay. Our frames are as young as they were five years before, it is the mind that has become matured. By youth I mean the growing and progressive season—its departure is only visible inasmuch as we have become, as it were, fixed and stationary. The qualities that peculiarly belong to youth—its “quick-thronging fancies,” its exuberance of energy and feeling, cease to be our distinctions at thirty. We are young but not youthful. It is not at thirty that we know the wild phantasies of Romeo—scarcely at thirty that we could halt irresolute in the visionary weaknesses of Hamlet. The *passions* of youth may be no less felt than heretofore; it is youth's *sentiment* we have lost. The muscles of the mind are firmer, but it is the nerve that is less susceptible, and vibrates no more to the lightest touch of pleasure or of pain.—Yes, it is the prime of our manhood which is the departure of our youth!

It seems to me that to reflective and lofty minds accustomed to survey, and fitted to comprehend, the great aims of life,—this is a period peculiarly solemn and important. It is a spot on which we ought to rest for awhile from our journey. It is the summit of the hill from which we look down on two even divisions of our journey. We have left behind us a profusion of bright things; never again shall

we traverse such fairy fields, with such eager hopes; never again shall we find the same

“Glory in the grass or splendour in the flower.”

The dews upon the herbage are dried up. The morning is no more.

“We made a posy while the time ran by,

But Time did beckon to the flowers, and they
By noon most cunningly did steal away
And wither in the hand.

Farewell, dear flowers, sweetly your time ye spent!” *

We ought then to pause for awhile—to review the past—to gather around us the memories and the warnings of experience—to feel that the lighter part of our destinies is completed—that the graver has begun—that our follies and our errors have become to us the monitors of wisdom: for since these are the tributes which Fate exacts from Mortality, they are not to be idly regretted, but to be solemnly redeemed. And if we are penetrated with this thought, our Past becomes the mightiest preacher to our Future. Looking back over the tombs of Departed Errors, we behold, by the side of each, the face of a warning Angel! It is the prayer of a foolish heart, “Oh, that my time could return!—Oh, that this had been done, or that could be undone!” rather should we rejoice that so long a season of reparation yet remains to us, and that Experience has taught us the lessons of suffering which make men wise. Wisdom is an acquisition purchased in proportion to the disappointments which our own frailties have entailed upon us. For no one is taught by the sufferings of another. We ourselves must have felt the burning in order to shun the fire. To refer again to the beautiful poem I have already quoted, the flowers that were

“Fit, while they lived, for smell and ornament,
Serve, after death, for cures.” †

At the age of thirty the characters of most men pass through a revolution. The common pleasures of the world have been tasted to the full and begin to pall. We have reduced to the sober test of reality the visions of youth—we no longer expect that perfection in our species which

* George Herbert.

† George Herbert.

our inexperience at first foretold—we no longer chase frivolities, or hope chimæras. Perhaps one of the most useful lessons that Disappointment has taught us, is a true estimate of Love. For at first we are too apt to imagine that woman (poor partner with ourselves in the frailties of humanity) must be perfect—that the dreams of the poets have a corporeal being, and that God has ordained to us that unclouded nature—that unchanging devotion—that seraph heart, which it has been the great vice of Fiction to attribute to the daughters of clay. And, in hoping perfection, with how much excellence have we been discontented—to how many idols have we changed our worship! Thirsting for the Golden Fountain of the Fable, from how many streams have we turned away, weary and in disgust! The experience which teaches us at last the due estimate of woman, has gone far to instruct us in the claims of men! Love, once the monopoliser of our desires, gives way to more manly and less selfish passions—and we wake from a false paradise to the real earth.

Not less important is the lesson which teaches us not to measure mankind by exaggerated standards of morality; for to imagine too fondly that men are gods, is to end by believing that they are demons: the young pass usually through a period of misanthropy, and the misanthropy is acute in proportion to their own generous confidence in human excellence. We the least forgive faults in those from whom we the most expected excellence. But out of the ashes of Misanthropy, Benevolence rises again; we find many virtues where we had imagined all was vice—many acts of disinterested friendship where we had fancied all was calculation and fraud—and so gradually from the two extremes we pass to the proper medium; and feeling that no human being is wholly good, or wholly base, we learn that true knowledge of mankind which induces us to expect little and forgive much. The world cures alike the optimist and the misanthrope. Without this proper and sober estimate of men, we have neither prudence in the affairs of life, nor toleration for contrary opinions—we *tempt* the cheater, and then *condemn* him—we believe so strongly in one faith, that we would sentence dissentients as heretics. It is experience alone that teaches us that *he who is discreet is seldom betrayed*, and that out of the opinions we condemn, spring often the actions we admire.

At the departure of youth then, in collecting and investigating our minds, we should feel ourselves enriched with these results for our future guidance, viz. a knowledge of the true proportion of the passions, so as not to give to one the impetus which should be shared by all; a conviction of the idleness of petty objects which demand large cares, and that true gauge and measurement of men which shall neither magnify nor dwarf the attributes and materials of human nature. From these results we draw conclusions to make us not only wiser but better men. The years through which we have passed have probably developed in us whatever capacities we possess—they have taught us in what we are most likely to excel, and for what we are most fitted. We may come now with better success than *Rasselas* to the Choice of Life. And in this I incline to believe, that we ought to prefer that career from which we are convinced our minds and tempers will derive the greatest share of happiness—not disdaining the pursuit of honours, or of wealth, or the allurements of a social career—but calmly balancing the advantages and the evils of each course, whether of private life or of public—of retirement or of crowds,—and deciding on each according, not to abstract rules, not to vague maxims on the nothingness of fame, or the joys of solitude, but according to the peculiar bias and temper of our own minds. For toil to some is happiness, and rest to others. This man can only breathe in crowds, and that man only in solitude. Fame is necessary to the quiet of one nature, and is void of all attraction to another. Let each choose his career according to the dictates of his own breast—and this, not from the vulgar doctrine that our own happiness, as happiness only, is to be our being's end and aim (for in minds rightly and nobly constituted, there are aims *out* of ourselves, stronger than aught of self), but because a mind not at ease is rarely virtuous. Happiness and Virtue re-act upon each other; the best are not only the happiest, but the happiest are usually the best. Drawn into pursuits, however estimable in themselves, from which our tastes and dispositions recoil, we are too apt to grow irritable, morose, and discontented with our kind; our talents do not spring forth naturally; forced by the heat of circumstance, they produce unseasonable and unwholesome fruit. The genius that is roused by things at war

with it too often becomes malignant, and retaliates upon men the wounds it receives from circumstance; but when we are engaged in that course of life which most flatters our individual bias, whether it be action or seclusion, literature or business, we enjoy within us that calm which is the best atmosphere of the mind, and in which all the mind's produce is robust and mellow. Our sense of contentment makes us kindly and benevolent to others; we are not chafed and galled by cares which are tyrannical, because ungenial. We are fulfilling our proper destiny, and those around us feel the sunshine of our own hearts. It is for this reason that happiness should be our main object in the choice of life, *because* out of happiness springs that state of mind which becomes virtue:—and this should be remembered by those of generous and ardent dispositions who would immolate themselves for the supposed utility of others, plunging into a war of things for which their natures are unsuited. Among the few truths which Rousseau has left us, none is more true than this—"It is not permitted to a man to corrupt himself for the sake of mankind." We must be useful according, not to general theories, but to our individual capacities and habits. To be practical we must call forth the qualities we are *able* to practise. Each star, shining in its appointed sphere, each—no matter what its magnitude or its gyration—contributes to the general light.

To different ages there are different virtues—the reckless generosity of the boy is a wanton folly in the man. At thirty there is no apology for the spendthrift. From that period to the verge of age, is the fitting season for a considerate foresight and prudence in affairs. Approaching age itself we have less need of economy; and Nature recoils from the miser, caressing Mammon with one hand, while Death plucks him by the other. We should provide for our age, in order that our age may have no urgent wants of this world to abstract it from the meditations of the next. It is awful to see the lean hands of Dotage making a coffer of the grave! But while, with the departure of youth, we enter steadfastly into the great business of life, while our reason constructs its palaces from the ruins of our passions—while we settle into thoughtful, and resolute, and aspiring men—we should beware how thus occupied by the world, the world grow "too much

with us." It is a perilous age that of ambition and discretion—a perilous age that when youth recedes from us—if we forget that the soul should cherish its own youth through eternity! It is precisely as we feel how little laws can make us good while they forbid us to be evil—it is precisely as our experience puts a check upon our impulses—it is precisely as we sigh to own how contaminating is example, that we should be on our guard over our own hearts—not, now, lest they err—but rather lest they harden. Now is the period when the affections can be easiest scared—when we can dispense the most with Love—when in the lustiness and hardihood of our golden prime we can best stand alone—remote alike from the romantic yearnings of youth, and the clinging helplessness of age. Now is the time, when neither the voice of woman nor the smiles of children touch us as they did once, and may again. We are occupied, absorbed, wrapped in our schemes and our stern designs. The world is our mistress, our projects are our children. A man is startled when he is told this truth; let him consider, let him pause—if he be actively engaged (as few at that age are not), and ask himself if I wrong him?—if, insensibly and unconsciously, he has not retreated into the citadel of self?—Snail-like he walks the world, bearing about him his armour and retreat. Is not this to be guarded against? Does it not require our caution, lest caution itself block up the beautiful avenues of the heart? What can life give us if we sacrifice what is fairest in ourselves? What does experience profit, if it forbid us to be generous, to be noble—if it counterwork and blight the graces and the charities, and all that belong to the Tender and the Exalted—without which wisdom is harsh, and virtue has no music in her name? As Paley says, that we ought not to refuse alms too sternly from a fear we encourage the idle, lest, on the other hand, we blunt the heart into a habit of deafness to the distressed—so with the less vulgar sympathies shall we check the impulse, and the frankness, and the kindly interpretation, and the human sensibility (which are the arms of the soul), because they may expose us to occasional deceit? Shall the error of softness justify the habits of obduracy?—and lest we should suffer by the faults of others, shall we vitiate ourselves?

This, then, is the age in which, while experience becomes

our guide, we should follow its dictates with a certain measured and jealous caution. We must remember how apt man is to extremes—rushing from credulity and weakness to suspicion and distrust. And still if we are *truly* prudent, we shall cherish, despite occasional delusions—those noblest and happiest of our tendencies—to *love and to confide*.

I know not indeed a more beautiful spectacle in the world than an old man, who has gone with honour through all its storms and contests, and who retains to the last the freshness of feeling that adorned his youth. This is the true green old age—this makes a southern winter of declining years, in which the sunlight warms, though the heats are gone,—such are ever welcome to the young—and sympathy unites, while wisdom guides. There is this distinction between respect and veneration—the latter has *always* in it something of love.

This, too, is the age in which we ought calmly to take the fitting estimate of the opinions of the world. In youth we are too apt to despise, in maturity too inclined to overrate, the sentiments of others, and the silent influences of the public. It is right to fix the medium. Among the happiest and proudest possessions of a man is his character—it is a wealth—it is a rank of itself. It usually procures him the honours and rarely the jealousies of Fame. Like most treasures that are attained less by circumstances than ourselves, Character is a more felicitous reputation than Glory. The wise man therefore despises not the opinion of the world—he estimates it at its full value—he does not wantonly jeopardise his treasure of a good name—he does not rush from vanity alone, against the received sentiments of others—he does not hazard his costly jewel with unworthy combatants and for a petty stake. He respects the Legislation of Decorum. If he be benevolent, as well as wise, he will remember that Character affords him a thousand utilities—that it enables him the better to guide the erring and to shelter the assailed. But that Character is built on a false and hollow basis, which is formed not from the dictates of our own breast, but solely from the fear of censure. What is the essence and the life of character? Principle, integrity, independence!—or, as one of our great old writers hath it, “that inbred loyalty unto Virtue which can serve her

without a livery." These are qualities that hang not upon any man's breath. They must be formed within ourselves; they must *make ourselves*—indissoluble and indestructible as the soul! If, conscious of these possessions, we trust tranquilly to time and occasion to render them known, we may rest assured that our character, sooner or later, will establish itself. We cannot more defeat our own object than by a restless and fevered anxiety as to what the world will say of us; except, indeed, if we are tempted to unworthy compliances with what our conscience disapproves, in order to please the fleeting and capricious countenance of the time. There is a moral honesty in a due regard for Character, which will not shape itself to the humours of the crowd. And this, if honest, is no less wise: for the crowd never long esteems those who flatter it at their own expense. He who has the suppleness of the demagogue will live to complain of the fickleness of the mob.

If in early youth it be natural sometimes to brave and causelessly to affront opinion, so also it is natural, on the other hand, and not perhaps unamiable, for the milder order of spirits to incur the contrary extreme and stand in too great an awe of the voices of the world. They feel as if they had no right to be confident of their own judgment—they have not tested themselves by temptation and experience. They are willing to give way on points on which they are not assured. And it is a pleasant thing to prop their doubts on the stubborn asseverations of others. But in vigorous and tried manhood, we should be all in all to ourselves. Our own past and our own future should be our main guides. "He who is not a physician at thirty is a fool"—a physician to his mind, as to his body, acquainted with his own moral constitution—its diseases, its remedies, its diet, its conduct. We should learn so to regulate our own thoughts and actions, that while comprising the world, the world should not tyrannise over them. Take away the world, and we should think and act the same—a world to ourselves. Thus trained and thus accustomed, we can bear occasional reproach and momentary slander with little pain. The rough contact of the herd presses upon no sore—the wrongs of the hour do not incense or sadden us. We rely upon ourselves and upon time. If I have rightly said that Principle is a main essence of Character, Principle is a thing we cannot

change or shift. As it has been finally expressed, "Principle is a passion for truth,"*—and as an earlier and homelier writer hath it, "The truths of God are the pillars of the world."† The truths we believe in are the pillars of *our* world. The man who at thirty can be easily persuaded out of his own sense of right, is never respected after he has served a purpose. I do not know even if we do not think more highly of the intellectual uses of one who sells himself well, than those of one who lends himself for nothing.

Lastly, this seems to me, above all, an age which calls upon us to ponder well and thoughtfully upon the articles of our moral and our religious creed. Entering more than ever into the mighty warfare of the world, we should summon to our side whatever auxiliaries can aid us in the contest—to cheer, to comfort, to counsel, to direct. It is a time seriously to analyse the confused elements of Belief—to apply ourselves to such solution of our doubts as reason may afford us. Happy he who can shelter himself with confidence under the assurance of immortality, and feel "that the world is not an Inn but an Hospital—a place not to live but to die in," acknowledging "that piece of divinity that is in us—that something that was before the elements, and owes no homage to the sun."‡ For him there is indeed the mastery and the conquest, not only over death, but over life; and "he forgets that he can die if he complain of misery!"§

I reject all sectarian intolerance—I affect no uncharitable jargon—frankly I confess that I have known many, before whose virtues I bow down ashamed of my own errors, though they were not guided and supported by Belief. But I never met with one such, who did not own that while he would not have been worse, he would have been happier, *could* he have believed. I, indeed, least of all men, ought harshly to search into that Realm of Opinion which no law can reach; for I, too, have had my interval of doubt, of despondency, of the Philosophy of the Garden. Perhaps there are many with whom Faith

* Hazlitt.

† From a scarce and curious little tract called "The Simple Cobbler of Aggavvam." 1647.

‡ Religio Medici, Part II. Sect ii.

§ *Ibid.* Part I. Sect. xliv.

—the Saviour,—must lie awhile in darkness and the Grave of Unbelief, ere, immortal and immortalising, it ascend from its tomb—a God!

But humbly and reverently comparing each state with each, I exclaim again, “Happy, thrice happy, he who relies on the Eternity of the Soul—who believes, as the loved fall one after one from his side, that they have returned ‘to their native country’”—that they await the Divine re-union;—who feels that each treasure of knowledge he attains he carries with him through illimitable being—who sees in virtue the essence and the element of the world he is to inherit, and to which he but accustoms himself betimes; who comforts his weariness amidst the storms of time, by seeing, far across the melancholy seas, the haven he will reach at last—who deems that every struggle has its assured reward, and every sorrow has its balm—who knows, however forsaken or bereaved below, that he never can be alone, and never be deserted—that above him is the protection of Eternal Power, and the mercy of Eternal Love! Ah, well said the dreamer of philosophy, “How much *He* knew of the human heart who first called God our Father!”

As, were our lives limited to a single year, and we had never beheld the flower that perishes from the earth restored by the dawning spring, we might doubt the philosophy that told us it was not dead, but dormant only for a time; yet, to continue existence to another season, would be to know that the seeming miracle was but the course of nature!—even so, this life is to eternity but as a single revolution of the sun, in which we close our views with the winter of the soul, when its leaves fade and vanish, and it seems outwardly to rot away: but the seasons roll on unceasingly over the barrenness of the grave—and those who, above, have continued the lease of life, behold the imperishable flower burst forth into the second spring!

This hope makes the dignity of man, nor can I conceive how he who feels it breathing its exalted eloquence through his heart, can be guilty of one sordid action, or brood over one low desire. To be immortal is to be the companion of God!

* Form of Chinese Epitaphs,

THE WORLD AS IT IS.

"WHAT a delightful thing the world is! Lady Lennox's ball, last night—how charming it was!—every one so kind, and Charlotte looking so pretty—the nicest girl I ever saw! But I must dress now. Balfour is to be here at twelve with the horse he wants to sell me. How lucky I am to have such a friend as Balfour!—so entertaining—so good-natured—so devilish clever too—and such an excellent heart! Ah! how unlucky! it rains a little: but never mind, it will clear up; and if it don't—why one can play at billiards. What a delightful thing the world is!"

So soliloquised Charles Nugent, a man of twenty-one—a philanthropist—an optimist. Our young gentleman was an orphan, of good family and large fortune; brave, generous, confiding, and open-hearted. His ability was above the ordinary standard, and he had a warm love and a pure taste for letters. He had even bent a knee to Philosophy, but the calm and cold graces with which the goddess receives her servants had soon discontented the young votary with the worship. "Away!" cried he, one morning, flinging aside the volume of La Rochefoucault, which he had fancied he understood; "Away with this selfish and debasing code!—men are not the mean things they are here described—be it mine to think exultingly of my species!" My dear Experience, with how many fine sentiments do you intend to play the devil? It is not without reason that Goethe tells us, that though Fate is an excellent, she is also a very expensive, schoolmistress.

"Ha! my dear Nugent, how are you?" and Captain Balfour enters the room; a fine, dark, handsome fellow, with something of pretension in his air and a great deal of frankness. "And here is the horse. Come to the window. Does not he step finely? What action! Do you remark his forehead? How he carries his tail! Gad, I don't think you shall have him after all!"

"Nay, my dear fellow, you may well be sorry to part with him. He is superb! Quite sound—eh?"

"Have him examined."

"Do you think I would not take your word for it? The price?"

"Fix it yourself. Prince Paul once offered me a hundred and eighty; but to you ——"

"You shall have it."

"No, Nugent—say a hundred and fifty."

"I won't be outdone—there's a draft for the one hundred and eighty guineas."

"Upon my soul, I'm ashamed: but you are such a rich fellow. John, take the horse to Mr. Nugent's stables. Where will you dine to-day—at the Cocoa-tree?"

"With all my heart."

The young men rode together. Nugent was delighted with his new purchase. They dined at the Cocoa-tree. Balfour ordered some early peaches. Nugent paid the bill. They went to the Opera.

"Do you see that *figurante*, Florine?" asked Balfour. "Pretty ankle—eh?"

"Yes, *comme ça*—but dances awkwardly—not handsome."

"What! not handsome? Come and talk to her. She's more admired than any girl on the stage."

They went behind the scenes, and Balfour convinced his friend that he ought to be enchanted with Florine. Before the week was out the *figurante* kept her carriage, and in return, Nugent supped with her twice a-week.

Nugent had written a tale for "The Keepsake;" it was his first literary effort; it was tolerably good, and exceedingly popular. One day he was lounging over his breakfast, and a tall, thin gentleman, in black, was announced, by the name of Mr. Gilpin.

Mr. Gilpin made a most respectful bow, and heaved a peculiarly profound sigh. Nugent was instantly seized with a lively interest in the stranger. "Sir, it is with great regret," faltered forth Mr. Gilpin, "that I seek you. I—I—I——" A low, consumptive cough checked his speech. Nugent offered him a cup of tea. The civility was refused, and the story continued.

Mr. Gilpin's narration is soon told, when he himself is not the narrator. An unfortunate literary man—once in

affluent circumstances—security for a treacherous friend—friend absconded—pressure of unforeseen circumstances—angel wife and four cherub children—a book coming out next season—deep distress at present—horror at being forced to beg—forcibly struck by generous sentiments expressed in the tale written by Mr. Nugent—a ray of hope broke on his mind—and *voilà* the causes of Mr. Gilpin's distress and Mr. Gilpin's visit. Never was there a more interesting personification of the afflicted man of letters than Gregory Gilpin. He looked pale, patient, and respectable; he coughed frequently, and he was dressed in deep mourning. Nugent's heart swelled—he placed a bank-note in Mr. Gilpin's hands—he promised more effectual relief, and Mr. Gilpin retired, overpowered with his own gratitude and Mr. Nugent's respectful compassion.

"How happy I am to be rich!" said the generous young philanthropist, throwing open his chest.

Nugent went to a *converrazione* at Lady Lennox's. Her ladyship was a widow, and a charming woman. She was a little of the blue, and a little of the fine lady, and a little of the beauty, and a little of the coquette, and a great deal of the sentimentalist. She had one daughter, without a shilling: she had taken a warm interest in a young man of the remarkable talents and singular amiability of Charles Nugent. He sat next her—they talked of the heartlessness of the world: it is a subject on which men of twenty-one and ladies of forty-five are especially eloquent. Lady Lennox complained, Mr. Nugent defended. "One does not talk much of innocence," it is said, or something like it is said, somewhere in Madame d'Epinay's Memoirs, "without being sadly corrupted;" and nothing brings out the goodness of our own hearts more than a charge against the heartlessness of others.

"An excellent woman!" thought Nugent; "what warm feelings!—how pretty her daughter is! Oh! a charming family!"

Charlotte Lennox played an affecting air; Nugent leaned over the piano; they talked about music, poetry, going on the water, sentiment, and Richmond Hill. They made up a party of pleasure. Nugent did not sleep well that night—he was certainly in love.

When he rose the next morning, the day was bright and fine; Balfour, the best of friends, was to be with him in an

hour; Balfour's horse, the best of horses, was to convey him to Richmond; and at Richmond he was to meet Lady Lennox, the most agreeable of mothers—and Charlotte, the most enchanting of daughters. The *figurante* had always been a bore—she was now forgotten. "It certainly is a delightful world!" repeated Nugent, as he tied his neck cloth.

It was some time—I will not say how long—after the date of this happy day; Nugent was alone in his apartment, and walking to and fro—his arms folded, and a frown upon his brow. "What a rascal! what a mean wretch!—and the horse was lame when he sold it—not worth ten pounds!—and I so confiding—d—n my folly! *That*, however, I should not mind; but to have saddled me with his cast-off mistress!—to make me the laughing-stock of the world! By heavens, he shall repent it! Borrowed money of me, then made a jest of my good-nature!—introduced me to his club, in order to pillage me!—but, thank Heaven, I can shoot him yet! Ha! Colonel; this is kind!"

Colonel Nelmore, an elderly gentleman, well known in society, with a fine forehead, a shrewd, contemplative eye, and an agreeable address, entered the room. To him Nugent communicated the long list of his grievances, and concluded by begging him to convey a challenge to the best of friends—Captain Balfour. The colonel raised his eyebrows.

"But,—my dear sir,—this gentleman has certainly behaved ill to you, I allow it—but for what specific offence do you mean to challenge him?"

"For his conduct in general."

The colonel laughed.

"For saying yesterday, then, that I was grown a d—d bore, and he should cut me in future. He told Selwyn so in the bay-window at White's."

The colonel took snuff.

"My good young friend," said he, "I see you don't know the world. Come and dine with me to-day—a punctual seven. We'll talk over these matters. Meanwhile, you can't challenge a man for calling you a bore."

"Not challenge him!—what should I do, then?"

"Laugh—shake your head at him, and say—Ah! Balfour, you're a sad fellow!"

The colonel succeeded in preventing the challenge, but Nugent's indignation at the best of friends remained as warm as ever. He declined the colonel's invitation—he was to dine with the Lennoxes. Meanwhile, he went to the shady part of Kensington Gardens to indulge his reflections. He sat himself down in an arbour, and looked moralisingly over the initials, the dates, and the witticisms, that hands, long since mouldering, have consigned to the admiration of posterity.

A gay party were strolling by this retreat—their laughter and their voices preceded them. "Yes," said a sharp, dry voice, which Nugent recognised as belonging to one of the wits of the day—"Yes, I saw you, Lady Lennox, talking sentiment to Nugent—fie! how could you waste your time so unprofitably!"

"Ah! poor young man! he is certainly *bien bête*, with his fine phrases and so forth: but 'tis a good creature on the whole, and exceedingly useful!"

"Useful!"

"Yes; fills up a vacant place at one's table, at a day's warning; lends me his carriage horses when mine have caught cold; subscribes to my charities for me; and supplies the drawing-room with flowers. In a word, if he were more sensible, he would be less agreeable: his sole charm is his foibles."

What a description by the most sentimental of mothers, of the most interesting of young men! Nugent was thunderstruck; the party swept by; he was undiscovered.

He raved, he swore, he was furious. He goes to the dinner to-day! No, he would write such a letter to the lady—it should speak daggers! But the daughter: Charlotte was not of the party. Charlotte—oh! Charlotte was quite a different creature from her mother—the most natural, the most simple of human beings, and evidently loved him. He could not be mistaken there. Yes, for her sake he would go to the dinner; he would smother his just resentment.

He went to Lady Lennox's. It was a large party. The young Marquess of Austerly had just returned from his travels. He was sitting next to the most lovely of daughters. Nugent was forgotten.

After dinner, however, he found an opportunity to say a few words in a whisper to Charlotte. He hinted a tender reproach, and he begged her to sing, "*We met; 'twas in a*

crowd." Charlotte was hoarse—had caught cold. Charlotte could not sing. Nugent left the room, and the house. When he got to the end of the street, he discovered that he had left his cane behind. He went back for it, glad (for he was really in love) of an excuse for darting an angry glance at the most simple, the most natural of human beings, that should prevent her sleeping the whole night. He ascended the drawing-room; and Charlotte was delighting the Marquess of Austerly, who leaned over her chair, with "*We met; 'twas in a crowd.*"

Charlotte Lennox was young, lovely, and artful. Lord Austerly was young, inexperienced, and vain. In less than a month his lordship proposed, and was accepted.

"Well, well!" said poor Nugent one morning, breaking from a reverie; "betrayed in my friendship, deceived in my love, the pleasure of doing good is still left to me. Friendship quits us at the first stage of life, Love at the second, Benevolence lasts till death! Poor Gilpin! how grateful he is! I must see if I can get him that place abroad." To amuse his thoughts, he took up a new magazine. He opened the page at a violent attack on himself—on his beautiful tale in "*The Keepsake.*" The satire was not confined to the work; it extended to the author. He was a fop, a coxcomb, a ninny, an intellectual dwarf, a miserable creature, and an abortion! These are pleasant studies for a man out of spirits, especially before he is used to them. Nugent had just flung the magazine to the other end of the room, when his lawyer came to arrange matters about a mortgage, which the generous Nugent had already been forced to raise on his estates. The lawyer was a pleasant, entertaining man of the world, accustomed to the society, for he was accustomed to the wants, of young men. He perceived that Nugent was a little out of humour. He attributed the cause, naturally enough, to the mortgage; and to divert his thoughts, he entered first on a general conversation.

"What rogues there are in the world!" said he. Nugent groaned. "This morning, for instance, before I came to you, I was engaged in a very curious piece of business. A gentleman gave his son-in-law a qualification to stand for a borough: the son-in-law kept the deed, and so cheated the good gentleman out of more than three hundred pounds a-year. Yesterday I was employed against a fraudulent

bankrupt—such an instance of long, premeditated, cold-hearted, deliberate rascality! And when I leave you, I must see what is to be done with a literary swindler, who, on the strength of a consumptive cough, and a suit of black, has been respectably living on compassion for the two last years."

"Ha!"

"He has just committed the most nefarious fraud—a forgery, in short, on his own uncle, who has twice seriously distressed himself to save the rogue of a nephew, and who must now submit to this loss, or proclaim, by a criminal prosecution, the disgrace of his own family. The nephew proceeded, of course, on his knowledge of my client's goodness of heart; and thus a man suffers in proportion to his amiability."

"Is his name Gil—Gil—Gilpin?" stammered Nugent.

"The same! O-ho! have you been bit, too, Mr. Nugent?"

Before our hero could answer, a letter was brought to him. Nugent tore the seal; it was from the editor of the magazine in which he had just read his own condemnation. It ran thus:

"SIR,—Having been absent from London on unavoidable business for the last month, and the care of the —— Magazine having thereby devolved on another, who has very ill-discharged its duties, I had the surprise and mortification of perceiving, on my return this day, that a most unwarrantable and personal attack upon you has been admitted in the number for this month. I cannot sufficiently express my regret, the more especially on finding that the article in question was written by a mere mercenary in letters. To convince you of my concern, and my resolution to guard against such unworthy proceedings in future, I enclose you another and yet severer attack, which was sent to us for our next number, and for which, I grieve to say, the unprincipled author has already succeeded in obtaining from the proprietor—a remuneration. I have the honour to be, Sir," &c. &c. &c.

Nugent's eyes fell on the enclosed paper: it was in the handwriting of Mr. Gregory Gilpin, the most grateful of distressed literary men.

"You seem melancholy to-day, my dear Nugent," said Colonel Nelmore, as he met his young friend walking with downcast eyes in the old mall of St. James's Park.

"I am unhappy, I am discontented,—the gloss is faded from life," answered Nugent, sighing.

"I love meeting with a pensive man," said the colonel: "let me join you, and let us dine together, *tête-à-tête*, at my bachelor's table. You refused me some time ago; may I be more fortunate now?"

"I shall be but poor company," rejoined Nugent; "but I am very much obliged to you, and I accept your invitation with pleasure."

Colonel Nelmore was a man who had told some fifty years. He had known misfortune in his day, and he had seen a great deal of the harsh realities of life. But he had not suffered nor lived in vain. He was no theorist, and did not affect the philosopher; but he was contented with a small fortune, popular with retired habits, observant with a love for study, and, above all, he did a great deal of general good, exactly because he embraced no particular system.

"Yes," said Nugent, as they sat together after dinner, and the younger man had unbosomed to the elder, who had been his father's most intimate friend, all that had seemed to him the most unexampled of misfortunes—after he had repeated the perfidies of Balfour, the faithlessness of Charlotte, and the rascalities of Gilpin—"Yes," said he, "I now see my error; I no longer love my species; I no longer place reliance in the love, friendship, sincerity, or virtue of the world; I will no longer trust myself open-hearted in this vast community of knaves; I will not fly mankind, but I will despise them."

The colonel smiled. "You shall put on your hat, my young friend, and pay a little visit with me:—nay, no excuse: it is only to an old lady, who has given me permission to drink tea with her." Nugent demurred, but consented. The two gentlemen walked to a small house in the Regent's Park. They were admitted to a drawing-room, where they found a blind old lady, of a cheerful countenance, and prepossessing manners.

"And how does your son do?" asked the colonel, after the first salutations were over: "have you seen him lately?"

"Seen him lately! why you know he rarely lets a day pass without calling on, or writing to, me. Since the affliction which visited me with blindness, though he has nothing to hope from me, though from my jointure I must necessarily be a burthen to one of his limited income and mixing so much with the world as he does; yet had I been the richest mother in England, and every thing at my own disposal, he could not have been more attentive, more kind to me. He will cheerfully give up the gayest party to come and read to me, if I am the least unwell, or the least out of spirits; and he sold his horses to pay Miss Blandly, since I could not afford from my own income to pay the salary, so accomplished a musician asked to become my companion. Music, you know, is now my chief luxury. Oh, he is a paragon of sons—the world think him dissipated and heartless; but if they could see how tender he is to me!" exclaimed the mother, clasping her hands, as the tears gushed from her eyes. Nugent was charmed: the colonel encouraged the lady to proceed; and Nugent thought he had never passed a more agreeable hour than in listening to her maternal praises of her affectionate son.

"Ah, colonel!" said he, as they left the house, "how much wiser have you been than myself; you have selected your friends with discretion. What would I give to possess such a friend as that good son must be! But you never told me the lady's name."

"Patience," said the colonel, taking snuff; "I have another visit to pay."

Nelmore turned down a little alley, and knocked at a small cottage. A woman with a child at her breast opened the door; and Nugent stood in one of those scenes of cheerful poverty which it so satisfies the complacency of the rich to behold.

"Aha!" said Nelmore, looking round, "you seem comfortable enough now; your benefactor has not done his work by halves."

"Blessings on his heart, no! Oh! sir, when I think how distressed he is himself, how often he has been put to it for money, how calumniated he is by the world, I cannot express how grateful I am, how grateful I ought to be. He has robbed himself to feed us, and merely because he knew my husband in youth."

The colonel permitted the woman to run on. Nugent wiped his eyes, and left his purse behind him. "Who is this admirable, this self-denying man?" cried he, when they were once more in the street. "He is in distress himself—would I could relieve him! Ah, you already reconcile me to the world. I acknowledge your motive in leading me hither; there are good men as well as bad. All are not Balfours and Gilpins! But the name—the name of these poor people's benefactor!"

"Stay," said the colonel, as they now entered Oxford Street; "this is lucky indeed, I see a good lady whom I wish to accost. Well, Mrs. Johnson," addressing a stout, comely, middle-aged woman of respectable appearance, who, with a basket on her arm, was coming out of an oil shop; "so you have been labouring in your vocation I see—making household purchases. And how is your young lady?"

"Very well, sir, I am happy to say," replied the old woman, curtsying. "And you are well too, I hope, sir?"

"Yes, considering the dissipation of the long season, pretty well, thank you. But I suppose your young mistress is as gay and heartless as ever—a mere fashionable wife, eh?"

"Sir!" said the woman, bridling up, "there is not a better lady in the world than my young lady; I have known her since she was that high!"

"What, she's good-tempered, I suppose?" said the colonel, sneering.

"Good-tempered! I believe it is impossible for her to say a harsh word to any one. There never was so mild, so even-like a temper."

"What, and not heartless? eh! this is too good!"

"Heartless! she nursed me herself when I broke my leg by a fall; and every night before she went out to any party, she would come into my room with her sweet smile, and see if I wanted any thing."

"And you fancy, Mrs. Johnson, that she'll make a good wife: why she was not much in love when she married."

"I don't know as to that, sir, whether she was or not; but I'm sure she is always studying my lord's wishes, and I heard him say this very morning to his brother—'Arthur, if you knew what a treasure I possess!'"

"You are very right," said the colonel, resuming his natural manner: "and I only spoke for the pleasure of seeing how well and how justly you could defend your mistress; she is, truly, an excellent lady—good evening to you."

"I have seen that woman before," said Nugent, "but I can't think where; she has the appearance of being a housekeeper in some family."

"She is so."

"How pleasant it is to hear of female excellence in the great world!" continued Nugent, sighing; "it was evident to see the honest servant was sincere in her praise. Happy husband, whoever he may be!"

They were now at the colonel's house. "Just let me read this passage," said Nelmore, opening the pages of a French Philosopher; "and as I do not pronounce French like a native, I will translate as I proceed."

"In order to love mankind—expect but little from them; in order to view their faults, without bitterness, we must *accustom* ourselves to pardon them, and to perceive that indulgence is a justice which frail humanity has a right to demand from wisdom. Now, nothing tends more to dispose us to indulgence, to close our hearts against hatred, to open them to the principles of a humane and soft morality, than a profound knowledge of the human heart. Accordingly, the wisest men have always been the most indulgent,' &c.

"And now prepare to be surprised. That good son whom you admired so much, whom you wished you could obtain as a friend, is Captain Balfour; that generous, self-denying man, whom you desired so nobly to relieve, is Mr. Gilpin; that young lady who, in the flush of health, beauty, dissipation, and conquest, could attend the sick chamber of her servant, and whom her husband discovers to be a treasure, is Charlotte Lennox!"

"Good Heavens!" cried Nugent, "what then am I to believe? Has some juggling been practised on my understanding? and are Balfour, Gilpin, and Miss Lennox, after all, patterns of perfection?"

"No, indeed, very far from it: Balfour is a dissipated, reckless man—of loose morality and a low standard of honour: he saw you were destined to purchase experience—he saw you were destined to be plundered by some one—

he thought he might as well be a candidate for the profit. He laughed afterwards at your expense, not because he despised you; on the contrary, I believe that he liked you very much in his way, but because in the world he lives in, every man enjoys a laugh at his acquaintance. Charlotte Lennox saw in you a desirable match; nay, I believe she had a positive regard for you; but she had been taught all her life to think equipage, wealth, and station better than love. She could not resist the temptation of being Marchioness of Austerly—not one girl in twenty could resist it; yet she is not on that account the less good-tempered, good-natured, nor the less likely to be a good mistress and a tolerable wife. Gilpin is the worst instance of the three. Gilpin is an evident scoundrel; but Gilpin is in evident distress. He was, in all probability, very sorry to attack you who had benefited him so largely; but perhaps, as he is a dull dog, the only thing the magazines would buy of him was abuse. You must not think he maligned you out of malice, out of ingratitude, out of wantonness: he maligned you for ten guineas. Yet Gilpin is a man, who, having swindled his father out of ten guineas, would in the joy of the moment give five to a beggar. In the present case he was actuated by a better feeling: he was serving the friend of his childhood—few men forget those youthful ties, however they break through others. Your mistake was not the single mistake of supposing the worst people the best—it was the double mistake of supposing commonplace people now the best—now the worst;—in making what might have been a pleasant acquaintance an intimate friend; in believing a man in distress must necessarily be a man of merit; in thinking a good-tempered, pretty girl, was an exalted specimen of Human Nature. You were then about to fall into the opposite extreme—and to be as indiscriminating in suspicion as you were in credulity. Would that I could flatter myself that I had saved you from that—the more dangerous—error of the two!”

“You have, my dear Nelmore; and now lend me your Philosopher!”

“With pleasure; but one short maxim is as good as all philosophers can teach you, for philosophers can only enlarge on it: it is simple—it is this—‘TAKE THE WORLD AS IT IS!’”

KNEBWORTH.

THE English arrogate to themselves the peculiar attachment to Home—the national conviction of the sacredness of its serene asylum. But the ancients seem equally to have regarded the “*veneranda Domus*” with love and worship. By them the hospitable hearth was equally deemed the centre of unspeakable enjoyments—their gayest poets linger on its attractions—the house as well as the temple had its secret penetralia, which no uninitiated stranger might profane with unbidden presence; the household gods were their especial deities, the most familiarly invoked, the most piously preserved. And a beautiful superstition it was, that of the household gods!—a beautiful notion that our ancestors, for us at least, were divine, and presided with unforgetful tenderness over the scene (when living) of their happiest emotions, and their most tranquil joys: a similar worship is not only to be traced to the eldest times, beyond the date of the civilised races that we popularly call “the Ancients,” but is yet to be found cherished among savage tribes. It is one of the universal proofs how little death can conquer the affections.

But with us are required no graven likeness—no fond idolatries of outward images. We bear our Penates with us abroad as at home, their atrium is the heart. Our household gods are the memories of our childhood—the recollections of the hearth round which we gathered—of the fostering hands which caressed us—of the scene of all the cares and joys—the anxieties and the hopes—the ineffable yearnings of love, which made us first acquainted with the mystery and the sanctity of Home. I was touched once in visiting an Irish cabin, which in the spirit of condescending kindness, the Lady Bountiful of the place had transformed into the graceful neatness of an English cottage, training roses up the wall, glazing the windows, and

boarding the mud floor;—I was touched by the homely truth which the poor peasant uttered as he gazed, half gratefully, half indignantly, on the change. “It is all very kind,” said he, in his dialect, which I am obliged to translate; “but the good lady does not know how dear to a poor man is every thing that reminds him of the time when he played instead of working—these great folks do not understand us.” It was quite true: on that mud floor the child had played; round that hearth, with its eternal smoke, which now admitted, through strange portals, the uncomfortable daylight, he had sat jesting with the kind hearts that beat no more. These new comforts saddened and perplexed him—not because they were *comforts*, but because they were *new*. They had not the associations of his childhood; the great folks did not understand him; they despised his indifference to greater luxuries. Alas! they did not perceive that in that indifference there was all the poetry of sentiment. The good lady herself dwelt in an old-fashioned, inconvenient mansion. Suppose some oppressive benefactor had converted its dingy rooms and dreary galleries into a modern, well-proportioned, and ungenially cheerful residence, would she have been pleased? Would she not have missed the nursery she had played in?—the little parlour by whose hearth she could yet recall to fancy the face of her mother long gone?—Would ottomans and mirrors supply the place of the old worm-eaten chair from which her father, on Sabbath nights, had given forth the holy lecture?—or the little discoloured glass in which thirty years ago, she had marked her own maiden blushes, when some dear name was suddenly spoken? No, her old paternal house, rude though it be, is dearer to her than a new palace; can she not conceive that the same feelings may make “the hut to which his soul conforms,” dearer to the peasant than the new residence which is as a palace to him? Why should that be a noble and tender sentiment in the rich, which is scorned as a brutal apathy in the poor? The peasant was right—“Great folks did not understand him!”

Amidst the active labours, in which from my earliest youth, I have been plunged, one of the greatest luxuries I know is to return, for short intervals, to the place in which the happiest days of my childhood glided away. It is an old manorial seat that belongs to my mother, the heiress of

its former lords. The house, formerly of vast extent, built round a quadrangle, at different periods, from the date of the second crusade to that of the reign of Elizabeth, was in so ruinous a condition when she came to its possession, that three sides of it were obliged to be pulled down: the fourth yet remaining, is in itself a house larger than most in the county, and still contains the old oak hall, with its lofty ceiling and raised music gallery. The park has something of the character of Penshurst,—and its venerable avenues, which slope from the house down the gradual declivity, giving wide views of the opposite hills crowned with cottages and spires, impart to the scene that peculiarly English, half stately, and wholly cultivated, character upon which the poets of Elizabeth's day so much loved to linger. As is often the case with similar residences, the church stands in the park, at a bow-shot from the house, and formerly the walls of the outer court nearly reached the green sanctuary that surrounds the sacred edifice. The church itself, dedicated anciently to St. Mary, is worn and grey, in the simplest architecture of the Ecclesiastical Gothic; and, standing on the brow of the hill, its single tower at a distance blends with the turrets of the house,—so that the two seem one pile. Beyond, to the right, half-way down the hill, and neighboured by a dell girded with trees, is an octagon building erected by the present owner for the mausoleum of the family. Fenced from the deer, is a small surrounding space sown with flowers—those fairest children of the earth, which the custom of all ages has dedicated to the dead. The modernness of this building, which contrasts with those in its vicinity, seems to me from that contrast, to make its object more impressive. It stands out alone, in the venerable landscape with its immemorial hills and trees,—the prototype of the thought of death—a thing that dating with the living generation, admonishes them of their recent lease and its hastening end. For with all our boasted antiquity of race, we ourselves,—we mankind,—are the ephemera of the soil, and bear the truest relation, so far as our mortality is concerned, with that which is least old.

The most regular and majestic of the avenues I have described conducts to a sheet of water, that lies towards the extremity of the park. It is but small in proportion to the demesnes, but is clear and deep, and, fed by some subterraneous stream, its tide is fresh and strong beyond its

dimensions. On its opposite bank is a small fishing-cottage, whitely peeping from a thick and gloomy copse of firs, and larch, and oak, through which shine, here and there, the red berries of the mountain-ash; and behind this, on the other side of the brown, moss-grown deer-paling, is a wood of considerable extent. This, the farther bank of the water, is my favourite spot. Here, when a boy, I used to while away whole holydays, basking indolently in the noon of summer, and building castles in that cloudless air, until the setting of the sun.

The reeds then grew up, long and darkly green, along the margin; and though they have since yielded to the innovating scythe, and I hear the wind no longer glide and sigh amidst those earliest tubes of music, yet the whole sod is still fragrant, from spring to autumn, with innumerable heaths and wild flowers, and the crushed odours of the sweet thyme. And never have I seen a spot which the butterfly more loves to haunt, particularly that small fairy, blue-winged species which is tamer than the rest, and seems almost to invite you to admire it—throwing itself on the child's mercy as the robin upon man's. The varieties of the dragon-fly glittering in the sun, dart ever through the boughs and along the water. 'It is a world which the fairest of the insect race seem to have made their own. There is something in the hum and stir of a summer noon, which is inexpressibly attractive to the dreams of the imagination. It fills us with a sense of life, but a life not our own—it is the exuberance of creation itself that overflows around us. Man is absent, but life is present. Who has not spent hours in some such spot, cherishing dreams that have no connexion with the earth, and courting with half-shut eyes the images of the Ideal?

Stretched on the odorous grass, I see on the opposite shore that quiet church, where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep"—that mausoleum where my own dust shall rest at last, and the turrets of my childhood's home. All so solitary and yet so eloquent! Now the fern waves on the slope, and the deer comes forth, marching with his stately step to the water-side to pause and drink. O Nymphs!—O Fairies!—O Poetry, I am yours again!

I do not know how it is, but every year that I visit these scenes I have more need of their solace. My departed youth rises before me in more wan and melancholy hues,

and the past saddens me more deeply with the present. Yet every year, perhaps, has been a stepping-stone in the ambition of my boyhood, and brought me nearer to the objects of my early dreams. It is not the mind that has been disappointed, it is the heart. What ties are broken—what affections marred! the Egeria of my hopes,—no cell conceals, no spell can invoke her now! Every pausing-place in the life of the ambitious is marked alike by the trophy and the tomb. But little men have the tomb without the trophy!

It is a small, and sequestered, and primitive village, that of Knebworth, though but thirty miles from London, consisting of scattered cottages, with here and there a broad green patch of waste land before the doors; and one side of the verdant lane, which makes the principal street, is skirted by the palings of the park. The steward's house, and the elergyman's, are the only ones—(save the manor-house itself)—aspiring to gentility. And here, nevertheless, did Dame Nature find her varieties—many were they and duly contrasted, when first, in the boundless sociability of childhood, we courted the friendship of every villager. The sturdy keeper, a stalwart man and a burley, whose name was an heirloom on the estates; and who, many years afterwards, under another master, perished in a memorable fray with the implacable poachers;—the simple, horn-eyed idiot basking before the gardener's door, where he lodged—a privileged pensioner, sitting hour after hour, from sunrise to sunset—what marvels did not that strange passive existence create in us—the young, the buoyant, the impetuous! how we used to gather round him, and gaze, and wonder how he could pass his time without either work or play!—the one patriarch beggar of the place, who seemed to beg from vanity not from want; for, as he doffed his hat, his long snow-white locks fell, parted on either side, down features of apostolic beauty—and many an artist had paused to sketch the venerable head;—the single *Lais* of the place, stout and sturdy, with high cheekbones and tempting smile, ill-favoured enough it is true, but boasting her admirers:—the genius, too, of the village—a woman with but one hand, who could turn that hand to anything; nominally presiding over the dairy, she was equally apt at all the other affairs of the public life of a village.—Dogs, cows, horses,—none might be ill or well, without her august permission;

in every quarrel she was witness, jury, and judge. Never had any one more entirely the genius of action: she was always in every thing, and at the head of every thing—mixing, it is true, with all her energy and arts, a wonderful fidelity and spirit of clan-ship towards her employer. Tall, dark, and muscular was she; a kind of caught-and-tamed Meg. Merrilies!

But our two especial friends were an old couple, quartered in a little angle of the village, who, hard on their eightieth year, had jogged on, for nearly sixty revolutions of the sun, hand in hand together, and never seemed to have stumbled on an unkind thought towards each other. The love of those two old persons was the most perfect, the most beautiful I ever beheld. Their children had married and grown up and left them—they were utterly alone. Their simple affections were all in all to them. They had never been to London, never above fifteen miles from the humble spot where they had been born, and where their bones were to repose. Them the march of knowledge had never reached. They could neither read nor write. Old Age had frozen up the portals of their intellect before the schoolmaster had gone his rounds. So ignorant were they of the world, that they scarce knew the name of the king. Changes of ministry, peace and war, the agitations of life, were as utter nothings to them as to the wildest savage of Caffraria. Few, as the arithmetic of intellect can comprise, were their ideas; but they wanted not to swell the sum, for the ideas were centred, with all that the true sentiment of love ever taught the wisest, within each other. If out of that circle extended their radii of love, it was to the family under whom they had vegetated, and to us who were its young hopes. Us indeed they did love warmly, as something that belonged to them. And scarcely a day ever passed—but what, in all the riot and glee of boyhood, with half a score of dogs at our heels—we used to rush into the quiet of that lonely cottage—scrambling over the palings—bustling through the threshold—sully-
ing with shoes that had made a day's circuit through all the woods and plantings, the scrupulous cleanliness of the hearth, and making their old hearts glad, and proud, and merry by the very discomfort we occasioned. Then were the rude chairs drawn into the jaws of that wide ingle nook—then was the new log thrown on the

hearth—then would the old dame insist upon chafing our hands, numbed with the cold, as one of us—ah, happiest he!—drew forth the fragment of cake, or the handful of figs and raisins—brought to show that they had not been forgotten. And, indeed, never were they forgotten by a more powerful hand and a more steady heart than ours, for daily from the hall came the savoury meal, which the old woman carved tenderly for her husband (for his hands were palsied), and until his appetite was sated, sat apart and refused to share. Old Age, so seldom unselfish!—and the old age of the poor peasant-woman, how many young hearts, full of the phrases of poetry and the mockeries of sentiment, would it have shamed!

I see the old man now in a great high-backed tapestry chair, which had been a part of the furniture of the old manor house: in his youth he had been on the sporting establishment of a former squire, my grandfather's predecessor and uncle, and he had contrived to retain still, fresh and undimmed, through how many years time might forget to register, a habit of green velvet, whose antiquated cut suited well his long grey locks and venerable countenance. Poor Newman Hagar! a blessing on that old head—surely you are living yet!—while I live, you are not all vanished—all swallowed up by the oblivious earth. And, even after I have joined you, perhaps this page, surviving both, shall preserve you amongst those whom the world does not willingly let perish! And on the opposite side of the hearth sat the partner of that obscure and harmless existence, with a face which, when *we* were there, never was without a smile at our presence, or a tear for our parting. Plain though her features must ever have been, and worn and wrinkled as they were then, I never saw a countenance in which not the *intellect*, but the *feeling* of our divine nature, had left a more pleasant and touching trace.

Sometimes, as the winter day closed in, and dogs and children crowded alike round the comfortable fire, we delighted to make the old man tell us of his dim memories of former squires—the notes of bugles long silenced—the glories of coaches and six long vanished—how the squire was dressed in scarlet and gold—and how my lady swept the avenues in brocade. But pleasanter to me, child as I was, was it to question the good old folks of their own

past fortunes—of their first love, and how they came to marry, and how, since, they had weathered the winds of the changing world.

“And I dare say you have scolded your wife very often, Newman,” said I once: Old Newman looked down, and the wife took up the reply.

“Never to signify—and if he has, I deserved it.”

“And I dare say, if the truth were told, you have scolded him quite as often.”

“Nay,” said the old woman, with a beauty of kindness which all the poetry in the world cannot excel, “how can a wife scold her good man, who has been working for her and her little ones all the day? It may be for a man to be peevish, for it is he who bears the crosses of the world; but who should make him forget them but his own wife? And she had best, for her own sake—for nobody can scold much when the scolding is only on one side.”

Who taught this poor woman her wisdom of love? Something less common than ordinary nature, something better than mere womanhood. For, verily, there are few out of novels to whom either nature or womanhood hath communicated a similar secret!

And we grew up from children to boys—from boyhood to youth. And old Hagar died—he died during my absence; and when I returned—I called at the old woman’s solitary house—I opened the latch—there she sat by the hearth with dull lack-lustre eyes. And Newman’s high chair was opposite in the accustomed place, and the green velvet habit was folded carefully on the seat. Poor old woman! her pleasure at seeing me could be revived no more. She was past all pleasure. Year after year time had essayed in vain to numb her gentle feelings and kindly sympathies: but one single hour—that had taken from her side its helpmate—had done the allotted task. Newman was dead—and the widow could feel no more. She lived on—but it was clockwork. She did not seem to mourn for him—so much as to be indifferent to every thing else. Once only I saw her weep—it was when, out of compassion for her solitary age, we wished to place a companion—a nurse in the cottage. “The sooner I’m dead the better,” she said. “How can I bear to see a strange face where the old man used to sit?”

It is over now—the broken bridge is past—they are

again united. If I were an Atheist for myself I would still pray that there may be a Heaven for the Poor! Without another world, who can solve the riddle of the disparities of this?

How many hours in the summer nights have I passed in the churchyard which lies embedded in that green and venerable park! There, no unseemly decorations maintain, after the great era of Equality has commenced, the paltry distinctions of the Past;—distinctions of a day—the Equality of the Eternal! There, for the most part unmarked and unrecorded, rise the green hillocks of the humble dead,—or, where the stone registers a little while the forgotten name and departed date, the epitaph is simple and the material rude. It is the very model—the very ideal—of the country church; so quiet is it,—so solitary—so ancient—so unadorned. It is the spot above all others where death teaches,—not as the spectre, but the angel; obtruding on us no unreal terror, but eloquent with its great and tender moral of "*Repose.*" And who has not felt his heart echo to that saying of the brilliant French-woman's* half intended as a point, but carried by nature, against the very will of the speaker, into a homely and most touching truth: "At times I feel the want to die, as the wakeful feel the want to sleep!"

This is the justest of similes,—worn, wearied, and sated, who has not felt the want to die, as the wakeful the want to sleep? But this is not the lesson which, after a little thought, the true morality of the Grave bequeaths. No, it is from Death that we extract the noble and magnificent lesson of Life. Awed by the sense of its shortness, we turn away elevated also by its objects. If short, let us crowd it with generous and useful deeds,—if eternity be at hand, let us prepare ourselves for its threshold by the aims and ends which are most worthy of the soul; and by the glory of our own thoughts and our own deeds, walk naturally as it were to the Immortal. Filling ourselves with this ambition, we rise beyond our sorrows and our cares—we conquer the morbid darkness that satiety gathers round us, and take from the Dead a moral won from their spirits and not their dust. He who fails in this penetrates not the true philosophy of the tomb.

The churchyard—the village—the green sward—the woods

* Madame du Deffand.

—the fern-covered hills—the water side, odorous with the reeds and thyme—the deep-shagged dells—the plain where the deer couch,—all united and blended together, make to me the place above all others which renews my youth and redeems it from the influences of the world! All know some such spot—blessed and blessing;—the Kaäba of the Earth—the scene of their childhood—the haunt of their fondest recollections. And while it is yet ours to visit it at will—while it yet rests in the dear and sacred hands to which it belonged of yore—while no stranger sits at the hearth, and no new tenants chase away “the old familiar faces,” who has not felt as if in storm and shower there was a shelter over his head—as if he were not unprotected—as if fate preserved a sanctuary to the fugitive, and life a fountain to the weary?

A blessing upon that Home, and upon its owner! In the presence of a Mother we feel that our childhood has not all departed! It is as a barrier between ourselves and the advance of Time. Chased and wearied out by the Cares of Manhood, we enter the temple dedicated to Youth—(“a guardian standing near us,”*)—and our persecutors sleep while we linger at the altar.

* Æschylus: “The Furies.”

THE CHOICE OF PHYLIAS.

A TALE.

PHYLIAS was a young Athenian, whom the precepts of Socrates had reared in the two great principles (or rather, perhaps, affections) which a State should encourage in her sons—the desire of Glory, and the worship of Virtue! He wished at once to be great and to be good. Unfortunately, Phylis nourished a third wish, somewhat less elevated, but much more commonly entertained—the wish to be loved! He had a strong thirst for general *popularity* as well as *esteem*; and to an aspiring soul he united a too-susceptible heart.

One day, as he was wandering amongst the olive-groves that border Cephissus, and indulging in those reveries on his future destiny which make the happiest prerogative of the young, his thoughts thus broke into words:—

“Yes, I will devote my life to the service of my countrymen: I will renounce luxury and ease. Not for me shall be the cooks of Sicily, or the garlands of Janus. My chambers shall not stream with frankincense, nor resound with the loud shouts of Ionic laughter. No: I will consecrate my youth to the pursuit of wisdom and the practice of virtue; so shall I become great, and so beloved. For when I have thus sacrificed my enjoyments to the welfare of others, shall they not all honour and esteem me? Will they not insist that I take the middle couch at the public festivals? and will not all the friends of my youth contend who amongst them shall repose upon my bosom? It is happy to be virtuous; but, O Socrates, is it not even happier to be universally beloved for your virtue?”

While Phylis was thus soliloquising, he heard a low, sweet laugh beside him; and, somewhat startled at the sound—for he had fancied himself entirely alone—he turned hastily round, and beheld a figure of very singular appear-

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ance. It was a tall man in the prime of life; but one side of the face and form was utterly different from the other: on one side the head was crowned with the festive wreath—the robes flowed loose and disordered—joy and self-complacency sparkled on the smiling countenance. You beheld a gaiety which could not fail to attract; but an air of levity which you could not respect. Widely contrasted was the other half of this strange apparition: without crown or garland, after the fashion of a senator of the Areopagus, flowed the sober locks; the garb was costly, but decent and composed; and in the eye and brow the aspect was dignified and lofty, but somewhat pensive, and clouded either by thought or care: in the one half you beheld a boon companion, whom you would welcome and forget; in the other a lofty monitor, from whom you shrank in unacknowledged fear; and whom even in esteeming you were willing carefully to shun.

“And who art thou? And from what foreign country comest thou?” asked the Athenian, in astonishment and awe.

“I come from the Land of the Invisibles,” answered the apparition: “and I am thy tutelary demon. Thou art now of that age, and hast attained to that height of mind, in which it is permitted me to warn and to advise thee. What vain dreams, O Phylas! have crept into thy mind? Dost thou not see that thou art asking two boons utterly incompatible with each other—universal fame and universal regard? Take thy choice of either; thou canst not combine both. Look well at the guise and garb in which I appear to thee; if thou wouldst be loved, thou seest in one half of me the model which thou shouldst imitate; if renowned, the other half presents thee also with an example. But how canst thou hope to unite both? Look again! can any contrast be stronger? Can any opposites be more extreme? Waste not thy life in a chimæra. Be above thy race, and be hated: be of their own level, and be loved. Thou hast thy choice!”

“False demon!” answered Phylas; “thou wouldst sicken me of life itself couldst thou compel me to be hated on the one hand, or worthy to be despised on the other. Thou knowest not my disposition. It bath in it nothing cynical or severe; neither should I presume upon any distinction I might attain. Why should men hate me merely

for *proving* the sincerity of my affection to them? Away! thou utterest folly or fraud, and art not of that good race of demons of which Socrates was wont to speak."

Once more the demon laughed. "Thou wilt know me better one of these days; and what now thou deemest *folly*, thou wilt then term *experience*. Thou resolvest, then, to seek for glory?"

"With my whole soul!" cried the Athenian.

"Be it so: and from time to time contrast thyself with Glaucus. Farewell!"

The apparition vanished: musing and bewildered Phylas returned home.

His resolutions were not shaken, nor his ambition damped. He resigned the common pleasures of his youth; he braced his limbs by hardihood and temperance, and fed the sources of his mind from the quiet fountain of wisdom.

The first essays of his ambition were natural to his period of life. He went through the preparatory exercises, and entered himself a candidate for the victorial crown at the Olympic Games. On the day preceding that on which the Games commenced, Phylas met amongst the crowd, which a ceremony of such brilliant attraction had gathered together in the Sacred Land, a young man whom he had known from his childhood. Frank in his manner, and joyous in his disposition, Glaucus was the favourite of all who knew him.

Though possessed of considerable talents, no one envied him; for those talents were never exerted in order to distinguish himself—his ambition was to amuse others. He gave way to every caprice of his own or of his comrades, provided that it promised pleasure. Supple and versatile, even the sturdiest philosophers were charmed with his society; and the loosest profligates swore sincerely that they loved, because they were not driven to respect, him. His countenance never shamed them into a suspicion that their career was ignoble; and they did justice to his talents, because they could sympathise with his foibles.

"You do not contend for any of the prizes, I think," said Phylas; "for I do not remember to have seen you at the preparatory exercises?"

"Not I, by Hercules!" answered Glaucus, gaily. "I play in the Games the part I play in Life—I am merely a spectator. Could I drink more deeply, or sleep more

soundly, if my statue were set up in the Sacred Wood? Alas! no. Let my friends love Glaucus their comrade—not hate Glaucus their rival. And you?”

“I am a competitor in the chariot race.”

“Success to you! I shall offer up my sacrifice for your triumph: meanwhile I am going to hear Therycides read his new play. Farewell!”

“What a charming person is Glaucus!” thought Phylas.

Even Phylas liked Glaucus the better for knowing Glaucus was not to be his antagonist.

The morning rose—the hour of trial came on. With a flushed cheek, and a beating heart, Phylas mounted his chariot. He was successful: his locks were crowned with the olive-wreath! He returned to Athens amidst the loudest acclamations. His chariot rolled through the broken wall of his native city: the poets lauded him to the skies. Phylas had commenced the career of fame, and its first fruits were delicious. His parents wept with joy at his triumph; and the old men pointed him out as a model to their sons. Sons hate models; and the more Phylas was praised, the more his contemporaries disliked him. When the novelty of success was cooled he began to feel that the olive-crown had its thorns. If he met his young friends in the street, they saluted him coldly: “We do not ask you to come to us,” said they; “you have weightier matters on hand than our society can afford. We are going to sup with Glaucus: while you are meditating, we suppose, the best way to eclipse Alcibiades.”

Meetings like these threw an embarrassment over the manner of Phylas himself. He thought that he was ill-treated, and retired into the chamber of pride. He became reserved, and he was called supercilious.

The Olympic Games do not happen every day, and Phylas began to feel that he who is ambitious has no option between excitement and exhaustion. He therefore set about preparing himself for a nobler triumph than that of a charioteer; and from the government of horses aspired to the government of men. He fitted himself for the labours of public life, and the art of public speaking. He attended the popular assemblies—he rose into repute as an orator.

Every one knows that at that time Athens was torn by

intestine divisions. Alternately caressing and quarrelling with the passionate Alcibiades, his countrymen now saw him a foe in Sparta, and now hailed him a saviour in Athens. Phylas, dreading the ambition of that unprincipled genius, and yet resisting the encroaching tyranny of the four hundred rulers, performed the duty of a patriot, and pleading for liberty displeased both parties. Nothing could be more disinterested than his conduct, or more admired than his speeches. He proved his virtue, and he established his fame; and wherever he went he was universally abused.

He frequently met with Glaucus, who, taking no share in politics, was entertained by all parties, and the most popular man of Athens, because the most unobtrusive.

"You are become a great man now," said Glaucus to him one day; "and you will doubtless soon arrive at the last honour Athens can confer upon her children. Your property will be confiscated, and your person will be exiled."

"No!" said Phylas, with generous emotion; "truth is great, and must prevail. Misinterpretation and slander will soon die away, and my countrymen will do me justice."

"The gods grant it!" said the flattering Glaucus. "No man merits it more."

In the short intervals of repose that public life allowed to the Athenians, Phylas contrived to fall in love.

Chyllene was beautiful as a dream. She was full of all amiable qualities; but she was a human being, and fond of an agreeable life.

In his passion for Chyllene, Phylas, for the first time in his career, found a rival in Glaucus; for love was the only passion in which Glaucus did not shun to provoke the jealousy of the powerful. Chyllene was sorely perplexed which to choose: Phylas was so wise, but then Glaucus was so gay; Phylas was so distinguished, but then Glaucus was so popular; Phylas made excellent speeches,—but then how beautifully Glaucus sung!

Unfortunately, in the stern and manly pursuits of his life, Phylas had necessarily outgrown those little arts of pleasing which were so acceptable to the ladies of Athens.

He dressed with a decorous dignity, but not with the studied, yet easy, graces of Glaucus. Now, too, amidst all

his occupations, could he find the time to deck the doors of his beloved with garlands, to renew the libations on her threshold, and to cover every wall in the city with her name added to the flattering epithet of *καλή*. But none of these important ceremonies were neglected by Glaucus, in whom the art to please had been the sole study of life. Glaucus gained ground daily.

"I esteem you beyond all men," Chyllene could say to Phylas without a blush. But she trembled, and said nothing, when Glaucus approached.

"I love you better than all things!" said Glaucus, passionately, one day to Chyllene.

"I love you better than all things, save my country," said Phylas the same morning.

"Ah, Phylas is doubtless the best patriot," thought Chyllene; "but Glaucus is certainly the best lover!"

The very weaknesses of Glaucus were charming, but his virtues gave Phylas a little of austerity. With Phylas, Chyllene felt ashamed of her faults; with Glaucus, she was only aware of her excellence.

Alcibiades was now the idol of Athens. He prepared to set out with a hundred ships for the Hellespont, to assist the allies of Athens. Willing to rid the city of so vigilant a guard upon his actions as Phylas, he contrived that the latter should be appointed to a command in the fleet. The rank of Glaucus obtained him a lesser but distinguished appointment.

Chyllene was in danger of losing both her lovers.

"Wilt thou desert me?" said she to Phylas.

"Alas! my country demands it. I shall return to thee covered with laurels."

"And thou, Glaucus?"

"Perish Alcibiades, and Greece herself, before I quit thee!" cried Glaucus, who, had there been no mistress in the case, would never willingly have renounced luxury for danger.

Phylas, with a new incentive to glory, and a full confidence in the sympathy of his beloved, set out for Andria. Glaucus was taken suddenly ill, remained at home, and a month afterwards his bride Chyllene was carried by torchlight to his house. It is true that everybody at Athens detected the imposition; but every one laughed at it good-humouredly; "For Glaucus," said they, "never set up for

a paragon of virtue!" Thus his want of principle was the very excuse for wanting it.

The expedition to Andria failed—Alcibiades was banished again—and Phylas, though he had performed prodigies of valour, shared in the sentence of his leader. His fellow-citizens were too glad of an excuse to rid themselves of that unpleasant sensation which the superiority of another always inflicts on our self-love.

Years rolled away. Phylas had obtained all that his youth coveted of glory. Greece rang with his name; he was now aged, an exile, and a dependant at the Persian court. There every one respected, but no one loved him. The majesty of his mien, the simplicity of his manners, the very splendour of his reputation, made the courtiers of the great king uneasy in his presence. He lived very much alone; and his only recreation was in walking at evening amongst the alleys of a wood, that reminded him of the groves of Athens, and meditating over the past adventures of his life.

It happened that at this time Glaucus, who had survived both his wife and his patrimony, had suffered himself, under the hope of repairing his broken fortunes, to be entrapped into a conspiracy to restore the Oligarchy after the death of Conon. He was detected, and his popularity did not save him from banishment. He sought refuge in the Persian court: the elastic gaiety of his disposition still continued, and over his grey hairs yet glowed the festive chaplet of roses. The courtiers were delighted with his wit—the king could not feast without him:—they consulted Phylas, but they associated with Glaucus.

One evening as Phylas was musing in his favourite grove, and as afar off he heard the music and the merriment of a banquet (held by the king in his summerhouse, and with Glaucus at his right hand), the melancholy exile found himself gently plucked by the hem of his garment. He turned hastily round, and once more beheld his Genius.

"Thy last hour fast approaches," said the demon; "again, then, I come to visit thee. At the morning of life I foretold that fate which should continue to its close: I bade thee despair of uniting celebrity and love. Thou hast attempted the union—what hath been thy success?"

"Mysterious visitor!" answered Phylas, "thy words

were true, and my hope was formed in the foolishness of youth. I stand alone, honoured and unloved. But surely this is not the doom of all who have pursued a similar ambition?"

"Recollect thyself," replied the phantom: "was not thy master Socrates persecuted unto death, and Aristides ostracised on account of his virtues? Canst thou name one great man who in life was not calumniated for his services? Thou standest not alone. To shine is to injure the self-love of others; and self-love is the most vindictive of human feelings."

"Yet had I not been an Athenian," murmured Phylas, "I might have received something of gratitude."

"They call Athens ungrateful," answered the spectre; "but every where, while time lasts, the ingratitude shall be the same. One state may exile her illustrious men, another merely defame them; but day is not more separate from night, than true fame from general popularity."

"Alas! thou teachest a bitter lesson," said Phylas, sighing; "better, then, to renounce the glory which separates us from the indulgent mercies of our kind. Has not my choice been an *error*, as well as a *misfortune*?"

The countenance of the Genius became suddenly divine. Majesty sat upon his brow, and unspeakable wisdom shone from his piercing eyes, as he replied, "Hark! as thou askest of me thy unworthy question, the laugh of the hoary Glaucus breaks upon thy ear. The gods gave to him the privilege to be beloved—and despised. Wouldst thou, were the past at thy control,—wouldst thou live the life that he hath lived? wouldst thou, for the smiles of revellers, or for the heart of the mistress of thy manhood, feel that thy career had been worthless, and that thy sepulchre should be unknown? No; by the flush upon thy cheek, thou acknowledgedst that to the great the pride of recollection is sufficient happiness in itself. Thy *only* error was in this,—the wish to obtain the fleeting breath of popular regard, as the *reward* for immortal labours. The illustrious should serve the world, unheeding of its frail applause. The whisper of their own hearts should convey to them a diviner music than the huzzas of crowds. Thou shouldst have sought *only* to be great, so would it never have grieved thee to find thyself unbeloved. The soul of the great should be as a river, rejoicing in its mighty course, and benefiting all—

nor conscious of the fading garlands which perishable hands may scatter upon its tide."

The corpse of Phylas was found that night in the wood by some of the revellers returning home. And the Persian king buried the body in a gorgeous sepulchre, and the citizens of Athens ordained a public mourning for his death. And to the name of Phylas a thousand bards promised immortality—and, save in this momentary record, the name of Phylas has perished from the earth!

LAKE LEMAN,

AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS.

THERE are some places in the world which persons of lively imagination, who contract a sympathy with Genius, feel it almost a duty to visit. Not to perform such pilgrimages seems a neglect of one of the objects of life. The world has many a Mecca and many a Medina for those who find a prophet in Genius, and a holiness in its sepulchre. Of these none are more sacred than

“Leman with its crystal face.”

The very name of that lovely lake is a poem in itself. It conjures up the living and actual shapes of those who have been greater than their kind. As the thought of Troy brings before us at once the bright Scamander—the heaven-defended towers—the hum of the wide Grecian camp, with the lone tent of Achilles, sullen at his loss—and the last interview of Hector and her to whom he was “father, mother, brethren”—so with the very name of Leman rise up, the rocks of Meillerie, the white walls of Chillon—we see the boat of Byron, with the storm breaking over Jura—the “covered acacia walk,” in which, at the dead of night, the Historian of Rome gazed upon the waters after he had finished the last page of his deathless work: Voltaire, Rousseau, Calvin—beings who were revolutions in themselves—are summoned before us. Yes, Leman is an epic; poetical in itself, it associates its name with the characters of poetry; and all that is most beautiful in nature is linked with all that is most eloquent of genius.

The morning after my arrival at the inn, which is placed (a little distance from Geneva) on the margin of the lake, I crossed to the house which Byron inhabited, and which is almost exactly opposite. The day was calm but gloomy, the waters almost without a ripple. Arrived at the oppo-

site shore you ascend, by a somewhat rude and steep ascent, to a small village, winding round which you come upon the gates of the house. On the right-hand side of the road, as you thus enter, is a vineyard, in which, at that time, the grapes hung ripe and clustering. Within the gates are some three or four trees, ranged in an avenue. Descending a few steps, you see in a small court before the door a rude fountain; it was then dried up—the waters had ceased to play. On either side is a small garden branching from the court, and by the door are rough stone seats. You enter a small hall, and, thence, an apartment containing three rooms. The principal one is charming,—long, and of an oval shape, with carved wainscoting—the windows on three sides of the room command the most beautiful views of Geneva, the Lake, and its opposite shores. They open upon a terrace paved with stone; on that terrace how often he must have “watched with wistful eyes the setting sun!” It was here that he was in the ripest maturity of his genius—in the most interesting epoch of his life. He had passed the bridge that divided him from his country, but the bridge was not yet broken down. He had not yet been enervated by the soft south. His luxuries were still of the intellect—his sensualism was yet of nature—his mind had not faded from its youthfulness and vigour—his was yet the season of hope rather than of performance, and the world dreamed more of what he would be than what he had been.

His works (the Paris edition) were on the table. Himself was every where! Near to this room is a smaller cabinet, very simply and rudely furnished. On one side, in a recess, is a bed,—on the other, a door communicates with a dressing-room. Here, I was told, he was chiefly accustomed to write. And what works? “Manfred,” and the most beautiful stanzas of the third canto of “Childe Harold,” rush at once upon our memory. You now ascend the stairs, and pass a passage, at the end of which is a window, commanding a superb view of the Lake. The passage is hung with some curious but wretched portraits. Francis I., Diana of Poitiers, and Julius Scaliger among the rest. You now enter his bed-room. Nothing can be more homely than the furniture; the bed is in a recess, and in one corner an old walnut-tree bureau, where you may still see written over some of the compartments, “Letters of

Lady B——." His imaginary life vanishes before this simple label, and all the weariness, and all the disappointment of his real domestic life, come sadly upon you. You recall the nine executions in one year—the annoyance and the bickering, and the estrangement, and the gossip-scandal of the world, and the "Broken Household Gods."* Men may moralise as they will, but misfortunes cause error,—and atone for it!

I wished to see no other rooms but those occupied by him. I did not stay to look at the rest. I passed into the small garden that fronts the house—here was another fountain which the Nymph had *not* deserted. Over it drooped the boughs of a willow; beyond, undivided by any barrier, spread a vineyard, whose verdant leaves and laughing fruit contrasted somewhat painfully with the associations of the spot. The Great Mother is easily consoled for the loss of the brightest of her children. The sky was more in harmony with the *Genius Loci* than the earth. Its quiet and gloomy clouds were reflected upon the unwrinkled stillness of the Lake; and afar its horizon rested, in a thousand mists, upon the crests of the melancholy mountains.

The next day I was impatient to divert the feelings which the view of Byron's villa from the garden of my lodgment occasioned, and I repaired on a less interesting pilgrimage, though to a yet more popular, and perhaps more lasting shrine. What Byron was for a season, Voltaire was for half a century: a power in himself—the cynosure of civilisation—the dictator of the Intellectual Republic. He was one of the few in whom thought has produced the same results as action. Next to the great Reformers of Religion, who has exercised a similar influence over the minds of men and the destinies of nations? Not indeed according to the vulgar sentiment that attributes to him and to his colleagues the *causes* of Revolution: the causes existed if no philosopher had ever lived;

* "I was disposed to be pleased. I am a lover of Nature and an admirer of Beauty. I can bear fatigue, and welcome privation, and have seen some of the noblest views in the world. But in all this, the recollection of bitterness, and more especially of recent and more *home desolation*, which must accompany me through life, has preyed upon me here; and neither the music of the shepherd, the crashing of the avalanche, nor the torrent, the mountain, the glacier, the forest, nor the cloud, have for one moment lightened the weight upon my heart, nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty, and the power, and the glory, around, above, and beneath me."—BYRON'S *Journal of his Swiss Tour*,

but he ripened and concentrated the effects. Whether for good or ill, time must yet shew—this only can we say, that the evil that has resulted was not of Philosophy but of Passion. They who prove a disease exists, are not to be blamed if, after their decease, wrong remedies are applied. The misfortune of human affairs is, that Sages point out the rottenness of an old system—but it is quacks that build up the new. We employ the most scientific surveyors to estimate dilapidations, and the most ignorant masons to repair them. This is not the fault of the surveyor. “*Les partisans de la liberté sont ceux qui détestent le plus profondément les forfaits qui se sont commis en son nom.*”*

The drive from Geneva to Ferney is picturesque and well cultivated enough to make us doubt the accuracy of the descriptions which proclaim the country round Ferney to have been a desert prior to the settlement of Voltaire. You approach the house by an avenue. To the left is the well-known church which “Voltaire erected to God.” (“*Deo erexit Voltaire.*”) It is the mode among tourists to wonder at this piety, and to call it inconsistent with the tenets of its founder. But tourists are seldom profound inquirers. Any one, the least acquainted with Voltaire’s writings, would know how little he was of an Atheist. He was too clever for such a belief. He is one of the strongest arguers Philosophy possesses in favour of the existence of the Supreme Being; and much as he ridicules fanatics, they are well off from his satire when compared with the Atheists. His zeal, indeed, for the Divine existence sometimes carries him beyond his judgment, as in that Romance, where Dr. Friend (Doctor of Divinity, and Member of Parliament!) converts his son Jenni, (what names these Frenchmen do give us!) and Jenni’s friend Birton, in a dispute before a circle of savages.—Dr. Friend overthrows the sturdy Atheist with too obvious an ease. In fact, Voltaire was impatient of an argument against which he invariably declared the evidence of all our senses was opposed. He was Intolerance itself to a reasoner against the evidence of Reason. I must be pardoned for doing Voltaire this justice—I do not wish to leave Atheism so brilliant an authority.

* The partisans of liberty are those who the most profoundly detest the errors committed in her name.—*Influence des Passions.*

Opposite to the church, and detached from the house, was once the theatre, now pulled down—a thick copse is planted on the site. I should like, I own, to have seen, even while I defend Voltaire's belief, whether "Mahomet" or "Le Bon Dieu" were the better lodged!

The house is now before you—long, regular, and tolerably handsome, when compared with the usual character of French or of Swiss architecture. It has been described so often, that I would not go over the same ground if it did not possess an interest which no repetition can wear away. Besides, it helps to illustrate the character of the owner. A man's house is often a witness of himself.

The *salle de réception* is a small room, the furniture unaltered—the same needlework chairs in cabriole frames of oak—the same red-flowered velvet on the walls. The utter apathy of the great Author to the Beautiful is manifest in the wretched pictures, which would have put an English poet into a nervous fever—and a huge stove, elaborately gaudy, of barbarous shape, and profusely gilt, which supports his bust. In this room is the celebrated picture of which tradition says that he gave the design. Herein Voltaire is depicted as presenting the "Henriade" to Apollo, while his enemies are sinking into the infernal regions, and Envy is expiring at his feet! A singular proof of the modesty of merit,—and of its toleration! So there is a hell then for disbelievers—in Voltaire! But we must not take such a design in a literal spirit. Voltaire was a conceited man, but he was also a consummate man of the world. We may depend upon it that he himself laughed at the whole thing as much as any one else. We may depend upon it that when the old gentleman, tapping his snuffbox, shewed it to his visitors, with that visage of unutterable mockery, he said as pleasant a witticism on the subject as the wittiest of us could invent. How merry he must have been when he pointed out the face of each particular foe! How gaily he must have jested on their damnatory condition! In fact, it was one of those boyish ebullitions of caricature which are too extravagant for malice, and which, to the last, were peculiar to the great animal vivacity of Voltaire. It was a hearty joke into which he plunged himself for the sake of dragging his enemies. Voltaire knew the force of ridicule too well to

mean to make himself, as the stupid starers suppose, gravely ridiculous.

The bed-room joins the salon; it contains portraits of Frederic the Great, Mad. Du Chatelet, and himself. Engravings from the last two have appeared in the edition of his works by Beaumarchais. You see here the vase in which his heart was placed, with the sentiment of "*Mon esprit est partout—Mon cœur est ici.*"* Le Kain's portrait hangs over his bed. Voltaire was the man to appreciate an actor: he himself was the Shakspeare of artifice. One circumstance proves his indifference to natural objects. The first thing of which a lover of nature would have thought in such a spot, would have been to open the windows of his favourite rooms upon the most beautiful parts of that enchanting scenery. But Voltaire's windows are all carefully turned the other way! You do not behold from them either the Lake or the Alps, a view which (for they are visible immediately on entering the garden) might so easily have been procured. But the Lake and the Alps were not things Voltaire ever thought it necessary either to describe or study. Living in the country he was essentially the poet of cities. And even his profound investigation of men, was of artificial men. Men's tastes, their errors, and their foibles,—not their hearts and their passions. If men had neither profound emotions, nor subtle and intense imaginations, Voltaire would have been the greatest painter of mankind that ever existed.

You leave the house then—you descend a few steps; opposite to you is a narrow road, with an avenue of poplars. You enter into a green, over-arching alley, which would be completely closed in by the thickset hedge on either side, if here and there little mimic windows had not been cut through the boughs: through these windows you may take an occasional peep at the majestic scenery beyond. That was the way Voltaire liked to look at Nature, through little windows in an artificial hedge! And without the hedge, the landscape would have been so glorious! This was Voltaire's favourite morning walk. At the end is a bench, upon which the great man, (and, with all his deficiencies, when will France produce his equal?) was wont to sit, and think. I see him now, in his crimson and gold-laced coat—his stockings drawn half-

* [My spirit is everywhere—my heart is here.]

way up the thigh—his chin rested on the long cane—that eye, light (he is misrepresented sometimes as having dark eyes) and piercing, fixed, not on the ground, nor upward, but on the space before him;—thus does the old gardener, who remembers, pretend to describe him: I see him meditating his last journey to Paris,—that most glorious consummation of a life of literary triumph which has ever been afforded to a literary man—that death which came from the poison of his own laurels. Never did Fame illumine so intensely the passage to the grave; but the same torch that flashed upon the triumph, lighted the pyre. It was like the last scene of some gorgeous melodrame, and the very effect which most dazzled the audience was the signal to drop the curtain!

The old gardener, who is above a hundred, declares that he has the most perfect recollection of the person of Voltaire; I taxed it severely. I was surprised to hear that even in age, and despite the habit of stooping, he was considerably above the middle height. But the gardener dwelt with greater pleasure on his dress than his person; he was very proud of the full wig and the laced waistcoat, still prouder of the gilt coach and the four long-tailed horses. Voltaire loved parade—there was nothing simple about his tastes. It was not indeed the age of simplicity.

Amidst a gravel space is a long slip of turf, untouched since it was laid down by Voltaire himself, and not far from hence is the tree he planted, fair, tall, and flourishing; at the time I saw it, the sun was playing cheerily through its delicate leaves. From none of his works is the freshness so little faded. My visit to Byron's house of the day before, my visit now to Ferney, naturally brought the habitants of each in contrast and comparison. In the persecution each had undergone, in the absorbing personal power which each had obtained, there was something similar. But Byron attached himself to the heart, and Voltaire to the intellect. Perhaps if Byron had lived to old age and followed out the impulses of Don Juan, he would have gradually drawn the comparison closer. And, indeed, he had more in common with Voltaire than with Rousseau, to whom he has been likened. He was above the effeminacy and the falseness of Rousseau; and he had the strong sense, and the stern mockery, and the earnest bitterness of Voltaire. Both Byron and Voltaire wanted

a true mastery over the *passions*; for Byron does not paint nor arouse passion; * he paints and he arouses *sentiment*. But in Byron sentiment itself had almost the strength and all the intensity of passion. He kindled thoughts into feelings. Voltaire had no sentiment in his writings, though not, perhaps, devoid of it in himself. Indeed he could not have been generous with so much delicacy, if he had not possessed a finer and a softer spirit than his works display. Still less could he have had that singular love for the unfortunate, that courageous compassion for the oppressed, which so prominently illustrate his later life. No one could with less justice be called "heartless" than Voltaire. He was remarkably tenacious of all early friendships, and loved as strongly as he disdained deeply. Any tale of distress imposed upon him easily; he was the creature of impulse, and half a child to the last. He had a stronger feeling for humanity than any of his contemporaries: he wept when he saw Turgot, and it was in sobs that he stammered out, "*Laissez-moi baiser cette main qui a signé le salut du peuple.*" † Had Voltaire never written a line, he would have come down to posterity as a practical philanthropist. A village of fifty peasant inhabitants was changed by him into the home of one thousand two hundred manufacturers. His character at Ferney is still that of the father of the poor. As a man he was vain, self-confident, wayward, irascible; but kind-hearted, generous, and easily moved.

* Byron has been called by superficial critics, the Poet of Passion, but it is not true. To paint passion, as I have elsewhere said,† you must paint the struggle of passion; and this Byron (out of his plays at least) never does. There is no delineation of passion in the love of Medora, nor even of Gulnare; but the sentiment in each is made as powerful as passion itself. Everywhere, in "*Childe Harold*," in "*Don Juan*," in the "*Eastern Tales*," Byron paints sentiments, not passions. When Macbeth soliloquises on his "*way of life*," he utters a sentiment;—when he pauses before he murders his king, he bares to us his passions. Othello, torn by that jealousy which is half love and half hatred, is a portraiture of passion: Childe Harold moralising over Rome, is one of sentiment. The Poets of Passion paint various and contending emotions, each warring with the other. The Poets of Sentiment paint the prevalence of one particular cast of thought, or affection of the mind. But the crowd are too apt to confuse the two, and to call an author a passionate writer if his hero always says he is passionately in love. Few persons would allow that Clarissa and Clementina are finer delineations of passion than Julia and Haidée.

† [Let me kiss that hand which has signed the salvation of the people.]

† In "*England and the English*."

He had nothing of the Mephistopheles. His fault was, that he was too human—that is, too weak and too unsteady. We must remember that, in opposing religious opinion, he was opposing the opinion of monks and Jesuits;—and Fanaticism discontented him with Christianity. Observe the difference with which he speaks of the Protestant faith—with what gravity and respect. Had he been born in England, I doubt if Voltaire had ever attacked Christianity; had he been born two centuries before, I doubt whether his spirit of research, and his daring courage, would not have made him the reformer of the church and not its antagonist. It may be the difference of time and place that makes all the difference between a Luther and a Voltaire.

As an Author, we are told that he has done many things well, none pre-eminently well—a most absurd and groundless proposition. He *has written* pre-eminently well! He is the greatest prose writer, beyond all comparison, that his country has produced. You may as well say Swift has done nothing pre-eminently well, because he is neither so profound as Bacon, nor so poetical as Milton. Voltaire is Swift *en grand*. Swift resembles him, but ten thousand Swifts would not make a Voltaire. France may affect to undervalue the most French of her writers—France may fancy she is serving the true national genius by plagiarising from German horrors,—neglecting the profundity of German genius; but with only isolated exceptions, all that of later times she has produced truly national and promising duration, is reflected and furnished forth from the peculiar qualities of Voltaire;—the political writings of Paul Courier, the poetry of Béranger, the novels of Paul de Kock.

But this digression leads me to one whom I must except from my remark. From Ferney I went to Coppet: from the least I diverted my thoughts to the most sentimental of writers. Voltaire is the moral antipodes to De Staël. The road to Coppet from Ferney is pretty but monotonous. You approach the house by a field or paddock, which reminds you of England. To the left, in a thick copse, is the tomb of Madame de Staël. As I saw it, how many of her eloquent thoughts on the weariness of life rushed to my memory! No one perhaps ever felt more palpably the stirrings of the soul within, than her whose dust lay there.

Few had ever longed more intensely for the wings to flee away and be at rest. She wanted precisely that which Voltaire had—common sense. She had precisely that which Voltaire wanted—sentiment. Of the last it was well said, that he had the talent which the greater number of persons possess but in the greatest degree. Madame de Staël had the talent which few possess, but *not* in the greatest degree. For her thoughts are uncommon, but not profound; and her imagination is destitute of invention. No work so imaginative as the “Corinne” was ever so little inventive.

And now the house is before you. Opposite the entrance, iron gates admit a glimpse of grounds laid out in the English fashion. The library opens at once from the hall; a long and handsome room containing a statue of Necker: the forehead of the minister is low, and the face has in it more of *bonhomie* than *esprit*. In fact, that very respectable man was a little too dull for his position. The windows look out on a gravel-walk or terrace; the library communicates with a bedroom hung with old tapestry.

In the *salle à manger* on the first floor is a bust of A. W. Schlegel and a print of Lafayette. Out of the billiard-room, the largest room of the suite, is the room where Madame de Staël usually slept, and frequently wrote, though the good woman who did the honours declared “she wrote in *all* the rooms.” Her writing indeed was but an episode from her conversation. Least of all persons was Madame de Staël one person as a writer, and another as a woman. Her whole character was in harmony; her thoughts always overflowed and were always restless. She assumed nothing factitious when she wrote. She wrote as she would have spoken.* Such authors are rare. On the other side of the billiard-room, is a small salon in which there is a fine bust of Necker, a picture of Baron de Staël, and one of herself in a turban. Every one knows that

* Madame de Staël wrote “*à la volée*.” “Even in her most inspired compositions,” says Madame Necker de Saussure, “she had pleasure to be interrupted by those she loved.” There are some persons whose whole life is inspiration. Madame de Staël was one of these. She was not of that tribe who labour to be inspired, who darken the room and lock the door, and entreat you not to disturb them. It was a part of her character to care little about her works once printed. They had done their office, they had relieved her mind, and the mind had passed onward to new ideas. For my own part, I have no patience with authors who are always invoking the ghosts of their past thoughts.

countenance full of power, if not of beauty, with its deep dark eyes. Here is still shown her writing-book and inkstand. Throughout the whole house is an air of English comfort and quiet opulence. The furniture is plain and simple—nothing overpowers the charm of the place; and no undue magnificence diverts you from the main thought of the genius to which it is consecrated. The grounds are natural, but not remarkable. A very narrow but fresh streamlet borders them to the right. I was much pleased by the polished nature of a notice to the people not to commit depredations. The proprietor put his “grounds under the protection” of the visitors he admitted. This is in the true spirit of gentle breeding.

It is impossible to quit this place without feeling that it bequeaths a gentle and immortal recollection. Madame de Staël was the *male* Rousseau! She had all his enthusiasm and none of his meanness. In the eloquence of diction she would have surpassed him, if she had not been too eloquent. But she perfumes her violets, and rouges her roses. Yet her heart was womanly, while her intellect was masculine, and the heart dictated while the intellect adorned. She could not have reasoned, if you had silenced in her the affections. The charm and the error of her writings have the same cause. She took for convictions what were but feelings. She built up a philosophy in emotion. Few persons felt more deeply the melancholy of life. It was enough to sadden that yearning heart—the thought so often on her lips, “*Jamais je n’ai été aimée comme j’aime.*” But, on the other hand, her susceptibility consoled while it wounded her. Like all poets she had a profound sense of the common luxury of *being*. She felt the truth that the pleasures are greater than the pains of life, and was pleased with the sentiment of Horne Tooke when he said to Erskine, “If you had but obtained for me ten years of life in a dungeon with my books, and a pen and ink, I should have thanked you.” None but the sensitive feel what a glorious possession existence is. The religion which was a part of her very nature, contributed to render to this existence a diviner charm. How tender and how characteristic that thought of hers, that if any happiness chanced to her after her father’s death, “it was to his mediation she owed it:” as if he were living!—To her he was living—in heaven! Peace to her beautiful

memory! Her genius is without a rival in her own sex; and if it be ever exceeded, it must be by one more or less than woman.

The drive homeward from Coppet to Geneva is far more picturesque than that from Ferney to Coppet. As you approach Geneva, villa upon villa rises cheerfully on the landscape; and you feel a certain thrill as you pass the house inhabited by Marie Louise after the fall of Napoleon. These excursions in the neighbourhood of Geneva spread to a wider circle the associations of the Lake;—they are of Lemman. And if the exiles of the earth resort to that serene vicinity, hers is the smile that wins them. She received the persecuted and the weary—they repaid the benefit in glory.

It was a warm, clear, and sunny day, on which I commenced the voyage of the Lake. Looking behind, I gazed on the roofs and spires of Geneva, and forgot the present in the past. What to me was its little community of watchmakers, and its little colony of English? I saw Charles of Savoy at its gates—I heard the voice of Berthelier invoking Liberty, and summoning to arms. The struggle past—the scaffold rose and the patriot became the martyr. His blood was not spilt in vain. Religion became the resurrection of Freedom. The town is silent—it is under excommunication. Suddenly a murmur is heard—it rises—it gathers—the people are awake—they sweep the streets—the images are broken: Farel is preaching to the council! Yet a little while, and the stern soul of Calvin is at work within those walls. The loftiest of the reformers, and the one whose influence has been the most wide and lasting, is the earliest also of the great tribe of the persecuted the City of the Lake receives within her arms. The benefits he repaid—behold them around! Wherever property is secure, wherever thought is free, wherever the ancient learning is revived, wherever the ancient spirit has been caught, you trace the work of the reformation, and the inflexible, inquisitive, unconquerable soul of Calvin! He foresaw not, it is true, nor designed, the effects he has produced. The same sternness of purpose, the same rigidity of conscience that led him to reform, urged him to persecute. The exile of Bolsec, and the martyrdom of Servet, rest darkly upon his name. But the blessings we owe to the first inquirers compensate

their errors. Had Calvin not lived, there would have been not one but a thousand Servedes! The spirit of inquiry redeems itself as it advances; once loosed, it will not stop at the limit to which its early disciples would restrain it. Born with them, it does not grow with their growth, it survives their death—it but commences where they conclude. In one century, the flames are for the person, in another for the work; in the third, work and person are alike sacred. The same town that condemned *Le Contrat Social* to the conflagration, makes now its chief glory in the memory of Rousseau.

I turned from Geneva; and the villa of Byron, and the scarce-seen cottage of Shelley glided by. Of all landscape scenery, that of lakes pleases me the most. It has the movement without the monotony of the ocean. But in point of scenic attraction, I cannot compare Lemán with Como or the Lago Maggiore. If ever, as I hope my age may, it is mine to “find out the peaceful hermitage,” it shall be amidst the pines of Como, with its waves of liquid sunshine, and its endless variety of shade and colour, as near to the scenes and waterfalls of Pliny’s delicious fountain as I can buy or build a tenement. There is not enough of splendour in the Swiss climate. It does not bring that sense of existence—that passive luxury of enjoyment—that paradise of the air and sun, which belong to Italy.

The banks of Lemán, as seen from the middle of the water, lose much of their effect from the exceeding breadth of the lake; and the distance of the Alps beyond detracts from their height. Nearness is necessary to the sublime. A narrow stream, with Mont Blanc alone towering by its side, would be the grandest spectacle in the world. But the oppression, the awe, and the undefinable sense of danger which belong to the sublime in natural objects, are lost when the objects are removed from our immediate vicinity. The very influence of the landscape around Lemán renders it rather magnificent than grand. There is something of sameness too in the greater part of the voyage, unless you wind near the coast. The banks themselves often vary, but the eternal mountains in the background invest the whole with one common character. But to see the Lake to the greatest advantage, avoid,—oh, avoid the steam-vessel and creep close by either shore.

Beyond Ouchy and Lausanne, the scenery improves in richness and effect. As the walls of the latter slowly receded from me, the sky itself scarcely equalled the stillness of the water. It lay deep and silent as death, the dark rocks crested with cloud, flinging long and far shadows over the surface. Gazing on Lausanne, I recalled the words of Gibbon; I had not read the passage for years; I could not have quoted a syllable of it the day before, and now it rushed upon my mind so accurately, that I found little but the dates to alter, when I compared my recollection with the page. "It was," said he, "on the day or rather the night of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last line of the last page in a summerhouse in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a berceau, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waves, and all nature was silent." What a picture! Who does not enter into what must have been [the feelings of a man who had just completed the work that was to render him immortal? What calmfulness of triumph, of a confidence too stately for vanity, does the description breathe! I know not which has the more poetry, the conception of the work or the conclusion—the conception amidst the "ruins of the Capitol, while the bareheaded friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter," or the conclusion at the stillness and solitude of night, amidst the Helvetian Alps. With what tranquil collectedness of thought he seems to bask and luxuriate as it were in the sentiment of his own glory! At such a moment did Gibbon feel that his soul which produced the glory was no less imperishable. For my own part, I should have felt that my soul was diviner than my genius;—the genius is but an effort of the soul, and the artificer is greater than the work. The triumphs we achieve, our conquests of the domain of Time, can but feebly flatter our self-esteem, unless we regard them as the proofs of what we are. For who would submit to deem himself the blind Nursery of Thoughts to be grafted on other soils, when the clay which nurtured them has crumbled to unproductive atoms?—To consider what Shakspeare thought, while on earth, is a noble contemplation; but it is nobler yet to con-

jecture what, *now*, may be the musings, and what the aspirations, of that spirit exalted to a sublimer career of being. It were the wildest madness of human vanity to imagine that God created such spirits *only* for the earth: like the stars, they shine upon us, but their uses and their destinies are not limited to be the lamps of this atom of creation. So vast a waste of spirit were, indeed, a monstrous prodigality, wholly alien to the economy and system of the Universe!

But new objects rise to demand the thought. Opposite are the heights of Meillerie; seen from the water, they present little to distinguish them from the neighbouring rocks. The village lies scattered at the base, with the single spire rising above the roofs. I made the boatmen row towards the shore, and landed somewhere about the old and rugged town or village of Evian. Walking thence to Meillerie along the banks of the lake, nothing could be richer than the scene around. The sun was slowly sinking, the waters majestically calm, and a long row of walnut-trees fringed the margin; above, the shore slopes upward, covered with verdure. Proceeding onward, the ascent is yet more thickly wooded, until the steep and almost perpendicular heights of Meilliere are before you—here grey and barren, there clothed with tangled and fantastic bushes. At a little distance you may see the village with the sharp spiral steeple rising sharp against the mountain; winding farther, you may survey on the opposite shore the immortal Clarens: and, whitely gleaming over the water, the walls of Chillon. As I paused, the waters languidly rippled at my feet, and one long rose-cloud, the immortalised and consecrated hues of Meillerie transferred from their proper home, faded lingeringly from the steeps of Jura. I confess myself, in some respects, to be rather of Scott's than Byron's opinion on the merits of the Héloïse. Julie and St. Preux are to me, as to Scott, "two tiresome pedants." But they are eloquent pedants! The charm of Rousseau is not in the characters he draws, but in the sentiments he attributes to them. I lose the individuality of the characters—I forget, I dismiss them. I take the sentiments, and find characters of my own more worthy of them. Meillerie is not to me consecrated by Julie, but by ideal love. It is 'the Julie of one's own heart, the visions of one's own youth, that one invokes

and conjures up in scenes which no criticism, no reasoning can divorce from the associations of love. We think not of the idealist, but the ideal. Rousseau intoxicates us with his own egotism. We are wrapped in *ourselves*—in *our own* creations, and not *his*;—so at least it was with me. When shall I forget that twilight by the shores of Meillerie—or that starlit wave that bore me back to the opposite shore? The wind breathing low from Clarens—Chillon sleeping in the distance, and all the thoughts and dreams—and unuttered, unutterable memories of the youth and passion for ever gone, busy in my soul. The place was full, not of Rousseau, but that which had inspired him—hallowed not by the Priest, but by the God.

I have not very distinctly marked the time in which the voyage I describe was broken up, but when next I resumed my excursion it was late at noon.

I had seen, at Vevay, Ludlow the regicide's tomb. A stern contrast to the *Bosquets* (now, alas! potato-grounds) of Julie! And from the water, the old town of Vevay seemed to me to have something in its aspect grateful to the grim shade of the King-slayer. Yet even that memory has associations worthy of the tenderness of feeling which invests the place; and one of the most beautiful instances of woman's affection is the faithful valour with which his wife shared the dangers and vicissitudes of the republican's chequered life. His monument is built by her. And, though in a time when all the nice distinctions of justice on either side were swept away, the zeal of Ludlow wrote itself in blood that it had been more just to spare, the whole annals of that mighty war cannot furnish a more self-contemning, unpurchasable, and honest heart. His ashes are not the least valuable relics of the shores of Lemman.

Again; as you wind a jutting projection of the land, Clarens rises upon you, chiefly noticeable from its look of serene and entire repose. You see the house which Byron inhabited for some little time, and which has nothing remarkable in its appearance. This, perhaps, is the most striking part of the voyage. Dark shadows from the Alps, at the right, fell over the wave; but to the left, towards Clarens, all was bright and sunny, and beautifully still. Looking back, the lake was one sheet of molten gold—wide and vast it slept in its glory; the shore on the right indis-

tinct from its very brightness—that to the left, marked and stern from its very shadow.

Chillon, which is long, white, and, till closely approached, more like a modern than an ancient building, is backed by mountains covered with verdure. You survey now the end of the lake ; a long ridge of the greenest foliage, from amidst which the frequent poplar rises, tall and picturesque, the spire of the grove. And now, nearing Villeneuve, you sail by the little isle hallowed by Byron—

“ A little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view ;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,” &c.*

The trees were still there, young and flourishing ; by their side a solitary shed. Villeneuve itself, backed by mountains, has a venerable air, as if vindicating the antiquity it boasts.

I landed with regret, even though the pilgrimage to Chillon was before me. And still I lingered by the wave—and still gazed along its soft expanse. Perhaps, in the vanity common to so many, who possess themselves in thought of a shadowy and unreal future, I may have dreamed, *as I paused and gazed*, that from among the lesser names which Leman retains and blends with those more lofty and august, she may not disdainfully reject that of one who felt at least the devotion of the pilgrim, if he caught not an inspiration from the shrine.

* “ Prisoner of Chillon,” line 341.

THE TRUE ORDEAL OF LOVE

A MORAL TALE FOR MARRIED PEOPLE.

NEVER were two persons more passionately attached to each other than Adolphe and Celeste! Their love was a proverb. Of course it was an unhappy attachment—nobody loves heartily, unless people take pains to prevent it. The spirit of contradiction is prodigiously strong in its effects.

Adolphe was rich and noble—Celeste was noble and poor. Their families were at variance; the family of Adolphe was exceedingly ambitious, and that of Celeste exceedingly proud. Had they been the best friends in the world, their fathers would not have assented to the loves of their children: Adolphe's father, because he desired a rich match for his son; Celeste's, because he was too proud to be under an obligation, and he was sufficiently a man of the world to know that you are to be considered obliged when a rich nobleman marries your daughter without a dowry. Celeste's father would have married her to a wealthy *parvenu* that he might have borrowed his money, in parading his condescension. For it is a maxim in good society, that no favour can be conferred by a *roturier*. Gratitude is for him to feel, if you accept his services. No sooner, therefore, was the dawning attachment of the lovers discovered, than their relations thought it necessary to be amazingly angry. There cannot be a doubt that you have an absolute right to the eyes, nerves, and hearts of your children. They have no business to be happy, unless it be exactly in the way most agreeable to yourself. These self-evident truths were not, however, irresistible for Adolphe and Celeste. Although the latter was locked up, and the former was watched, they continued often to correspond, and sometimes to see each other. Their love was no passing caprice—despite all difficulties, all obstacles, all dangers—it was more intense

than ever at the end of a year. Celeste had gallantly refused two young merchants, handsome and ardent, and a very old banker, who would have left her a widow in a year. Adolphe—the gay and handsome Adolphe—had renounced every flirtation and conquest; all women had palled in his eyes since he had seen Celeste. But though their passion was strengthened by time, time had failed to increase their hopes of its success—they began to doubt and to despair. The rose fled from Celeste's cheek—she pined away, her lip had lost all its smile, her form shrunk from all its roundness, tears stood constantly in her eyes, and she sighed so that it went to the hearts of all the servants in the house. In fine, she fell ill,—poor girl! she was dying for love. The more violent passion of Adolphe produced also its disorder. His pulse burned with fever, his language was often incoherent—his great grandfather had been mad—Adolphe promised fairly to take after his ancestor.

Alarmed, but not softened, the father of our lover spoke to him earnestly. “Renounce but this ill-placed love—if only for a time. Idleness is the parent of this youthful folly. I will devote half my fortune to purchase you that situation at court you have so often thought the height of your ambition. My son, you are young, bold, and aspiring; your fortunes, your fame will be secured. I willingly make you this sacrifice, provided you abandon Celeste.”

Adolphe wrung the hand of his father. “Impossible!” he murmured: “one look from her is worth all the dreams of ambition.” So saying, he left the room.

At length, finding they could not live together, our lovers formed the desperate design—not to live divided (it is a favourite alternative in the country in which they were born);—in short, they resolved upon suicide. I wish I had been able to obtain the letters which passed between them on this melancholy subject. I never read any so simple and so touching; if you had seen them you would have thought it the plainest proposition in the world, that persons, with any real affection for each other ought never to be unprovided with prussic acid, or laudanum at the least:—who knows but what an accident may separate them of a sudden? And to be separated!—how much pleasanter to be dead!

The lovers agreed, then, to poison themselves on the

same night. Their last letters were written blistered with each other's tears. It was eleven o'clock. Adolphe had retired to his chamber—he took up the poison—he looked at it wistfully. "To-morrow," said he, musingly—"to-morrow"—and he extracted the cork—"to-morrow—it smells very disagreeably—to-morrow I shall be at rest. This heart"—he shook the phial—"how it froths!—this heart will have ceased to beat—and our cruel parents will not forbid us a common grave." So saying, he sighed heavily, and, muttering the name of Celeste, gulped down the fatal draught.

Meanwhile, the father and mother of Adolphe were still at supper. The old butler, who had wiped his eyes when Adolphe had left the room, fidgeted to and fro, with the air of a man who has something at his heart. As his master was very hungry, and his mistress very sleepy, the good old man was heeded by neither. At length, when the other attendants had withdrawn, the old man lingered behind.

"That is quite right—that will do—shut the door after you."

"Sir—yes, sir——. Did you——hem."

"Did I what?"

"My young master, sir—yes, sir."

"Your young master? Well——"

"Alas! sir, I fear he is not quite right. Did you observe how he looked when he left the room?"

"*Ma foi!*—I was engaged with the chicken."

"And, you, madam, he kissed your hand very affectionately."

"Ah, yes (drowsily); he has an excellent heart, *le cher enfant!*"

"And, madam, I don't like to say any thing—but—but—my young master has been muttering very odd things to himself for the last two or three days, and all this morning he has been poisoning the dogs; by way, he said, of experiment."

"Poison!" said the mother, thoroughly awakened—"has he got any poison?"

"Ah, yes, madam, his pockets full."

"Heavens!" cried the father, "this must not be—if he should in despair—he is a very odd boy. His grandfather died mad. I will instantly go to his room."

"And I too," cried the mother.

The good couple hurried to Adolphe's chamber; they heard a groan as they opened the door; they found their son stretched on the bed, pale and haggard; on the table was a phial, labelled "poison;" the phial was empty.

"My son, my son!—you have not been so wicked—you have not—speak—speak!"

"Oh! I suffer tortures!—Oh! oh! I am dying. Leave me! Celeste also has taken poison—we could not live together.—Cruel parents—we mock you, and die!"

"Recover—recover, my son, and Celeste shall be yours," cried the mother, half in hysterics.

The father was already gone for a surgeon. The surgeon lived near to Celeste, and while he was hastily preparing his antidotes, his visitor had the charity to run to the house of Celeste's father, and hastily apprise him of the intelligence he had learned. The poor old gentleman hobbled off to his daughter's room. Luckily he found his wife with her; she had been giving the *petite* good advice, and that is a very prolix habit. Celeste was impatiently awaiting her departure; she was dying to be dead! In rushed her father—"Child, child, here's news, indeed! Are you alive, Celeste—have you poisoned yourself? That young reprobate is already——"

"Already!" cried Celeste, clasping her hands—"Already!—he awaits me, then. Ah, this appointment, at least, I will not break!" She sprang to her bedside, and seized a phial from under the pillow; but the father was in time—he snatched it from her hand, and his daughter fell into fits so violent, that they threatened to be no less fatal than the poison.

CHAPTER II.

WHATEVER the exaggerations of our lovers, they loved really, fervently, disinterestedly, and with all their hearts. Not one in ten thousand loves is so strong, or promises to be so lasting.

Adolphe did not die—the antidotes were given in time—he recovered. The illness of Celeste was more dangerous—she suffered, poor child! a delirious fever, and it was several weeks before her life and reason were restored.

No parents could stand all this: ordinary caprices it is

very well to resist, but when young people take to poison and delirious fever—the time for concession has arrived. Besides, such events derange one's establishment and interrupt one's comforts. One is always glad to come to terms when one begins to be annoyed oneself. The old people then made it up, and the young people married. As the bridegroom and Celeste were convinced that the sole object of life was each other's company, they hastened at once to the sweet solitudes of the country. They had a charming villa and beautiful gardens. They were both accomplished—clever—amiable—young—and in love. How was it possible they should be susceptible of *ennui*? They could never bear to lose sight of each other.

"Ah, Adolphe—traitor—where hast thou been?"

"Merely shooting in the woods, my angel."

"What, and without me! Fie! promise this shall not happen again."

"Ah, dearest! too gladly I promise."

Another time—

"What, Celeste!—three hours have I been seeking for you! Where have you hid yourself?"

"Don't look so angry, my Adolphe, I was only directing the gardener to build a little arbour for you to read in. I meant it as a surprise."

"My own Celeste! but three hours—it is an eternity without you! Promise not to leave me again, without telling me where to find you."

"My own dearest, dearest Adolphe! how I love you—may my company ever be as dear to you!"

This mode of life is very charming with many for a few days. Adolphe and Celeste loved each other so entirely that it lasted several months. What at first was passion had grown habit, and each blamed the other for want of affection, if he or she ever indulged in the novelty of different pursuits.

As they had nothing to do but to look at those faces they had thought so handsome, so it was now and then difficult not to yawn; and of late there had been little speeches like the following:

"Adolphe, my love, you never talk to me—put down that odious book you are always reading."

"Celeste, my angel, you don't hear me. I am telling you about my travels, and you gape in my face."

"My dear Adolphe, I am so exceedingly sleepy."

One morning as Adolphe woke and turned in his bed, his eyes rested on his wife, who was still asleep—"Bless me," thought he, "I never saw this before—let me look again—yes, certainly, she has—a wart on her chin!"

Adolphe rose and dressed himself—Adolphe was grave and meditative. They met at breakfast—the bride and bridegroom. Celeste was in high spirits, Adolphe was sombre and dejected.

"Let us ride to-day," said Celeste.

"My dear, I have a headache."

"Poor child! well, then, let us read the new poem."

"My dear, you speak so loud."

"I!" and Celeste, gazing reproachfully on Adolphe, perceived, for the first time, something in his eyes that surprised her—she looked again—"Good heavens!" said she to herself, "Adolphe certainly squints!"

On the other hand, Adolphe murmured, "The wart has grown greatly since morning!"

It is impossible to say what an effect this fatal discovery had upon Adolphe. He thought of it incessantly. He had nothing else to complain of—but then warts on the chin are certainly not becoming. Celeste's beauty had improved greatly since her marriage. Everybody else saw the improvement. Adolphe saw nothing but the wart on her chin. Her complexion was more brilliant, her form more rounded, her walk more majestic; but what is all this when one has a wart on the chin! The wart seemed to grow bigger and bigger every day—to Adolphe's eyes it threatened speedily to absorb the whole of the face. Nay, he expected, in due time, to see his beautiful Celeste all wart! He smothered his pain as well as he could, because he was naturally well-bred and delicate; and no woman likes to be told of the few little blemishes to which she herself is blind—he smothered his pain, but he began to think it would be just as well to have separate apartments.

Meanwhile, strange to say, Adolphe's squint grew daily more decided and pronounced. "He certainly did not squint before we married," thought Celeste; "it is very unpleasant—it makes one so fidgety to be stared at by a person who sees two ways—and Adolphe has unfortunately a habit of staring. I think I might venture to hint, delicately and kindly—the habit can't yet be incurable."

As wives are always the first in the emulation of conjugal fault-finding, Celeste resolved to hazard the hint—on the first favourable opportunity. “Well, my Celeste, I have brought my dog to see you,” said Adolphe one morning.

“Ah! down, down! Pray turn him out; see the mark of his paws. I can’t bear dogs, Adolphe.”

“Poor thing!” said Adolphe, caressing his insulted favourite.

“Was that to me or to the dog?” asked Celeste.

“Oh! to him, to be sure.”

“I beg your pardon, my dear, but I thought you looked at me. Indeed, Adolphe, if the truth may be said, you have lately contracted a bad habit—you are getting quite a cast in your eye.”

“Madam!” said Adolphe, prodigiously offended, and hurrying to the glass.

“Don’t be angry, my love; I would not have mentioned it if it did not get worse every day; it is yet to be cured, I am sure: just put a wafer on the top of your nose, and you will soon see straight.”

“A wafer on the top of my nose! Much better put one at the tip of your chin, Celeste.”

“My chin!” cried Celeste, running in her turn to the glass, “what do you mean, sir?”

“Only that you have a very large wart there, which it would be more agreeable to conceal.”

“Sir!”

“Madam!”

“A wart on my chin—monster!”

“A cast in my eye—fool!”

“Yes! How could I ever love a man who squinted!”

“Or I a woman with a wart on her chin!”

“Sir, I shall not condescend to notice your insults. No wonder—you can’t see! I pity your infirmity.”

“Madam, I despise your insinuations; but since you deny the evidence of your own glass, suffer me to send for a physician, and if he can cure your deformity, so much the better for you.”

“Yes, send for a physician; he will say whether you squint or not—poor Adolphe, I am not angry,—no, I pity so melancholy a defect.”

Celeste burst into tears. Adolphe, in a rage, seized his hat, mounted his horse, and went himself for the doctor.

The doctor was a philosopher as well as a physician—he took his pony and ambled back with Adolphe. By the way he extracted from Adolphe his whole history, for men in a passion are easily garrulous. “The perfidious woman,” said Adolphe, “would you believe it?—we braved everything for each other—never were two persons so much in love—nay, we attempted suicide rather than endure a longer separation. I renounced the most brilliant marriages for her sake—too happy that she was mine without a dowry—and now she declares I squint. And, oh, she has *such* a wart on her chin!”

The doctor could not very well see whether Adolphe squinted, for he had his hat over his eyes; besides, he prudently thought it best to attend to one malady at a time.

“As to the wart, sir,” said he, “it is not difficult to cure.”

“But if my wife won’t confess that she has it?—she will never consent to be cured! I would not mind if she would but own it. O the vanity of women!”

“It must have been after some absence that this little defect was perceived by you——”

“After absence—we have not been a day separated since we married.”

“O-ho,” thought the doctor, sinking into a reverie—I have said he was a philosopher—but it did not require much philosophy to know that persons who would have died for each other a few months ago, were not alienated only by a wart or a cast in the eye.

They arrived at Adolphe’s villa—they entered the saloon. Celeste no longer wept; she had put on her most becoming cap, and had the air of an insulted but uncomplaining wife!

“Confess to the wart, Celeste, and I’ll forgive all,” said Adolphe.

“Nay, why so obstinate as to the cast of the eye—I shall not admire you less (though others may), if you will not be so vain as to disown it.”

“Enough, madam—doctor, regard that lady—is not the wart monstrous—*can* it be cured?”

“Nay,” cried Celeste, sobbing, “look rather at my poor husband’s squint. His eyes were so fine before we married.”

The doctor put on his spectacles ; he regarded first one and then the other.

"Sir," said he, deliberately, "this lady has certainly a pimple on the left of her chin considerably smaller than a pin's head. And, madam, the pupil of your husband's right eye is, like that of nine persons out of ten, the hundredth part of an inch nearer to his nose than the pupil of the left. This is the case, as it appears to me, seeing you both for the first time. But I do not wonder that you, sir, think the pimple so enormous ; and you, madam, the eye so distorted, —since you see each other every day!"

The pair were struck by a secret and simultaneous conviction ;—when an express arrived, breathless, to summon Adolphe to his father, who was taken suddenly ill. At the end of three months Adolphe returned. Celeste's wart had entirely vanished ; and Celeste found her husband's eyes were as beautiful as ever.

Taught by experience, they learned then that warts rapidly grow upon chins, and squints readily settle upon eyes, that are too constantly seen ; and that it is easy for two persons to die joyfully together when lovers, but prodigiously difficult, without economising the presence, to live comfortably together when married.

ON THE WANT OF SYMPATHY.

I SMILE when I hear the young talk, in luxurious anticipation, of the delight of meeting with a wholly congenial spirit—an echo of the heart—a counterpart of self. Who ever lived that did not hope to find the phantom, and who ever lived that found it? It is the most entire and the most eternal of all our delusions. That which makes up the nature of one human being—(its nerves, sentiments, thoughts, objects, aspirations)—is infinitely multiplied and complex; formed from a variety of early circumstances, of imperfect memories, of indistinct associations, of constitutional peculiarities, of things and thoughts appropriate only to itself, and which were never known but partially to others. It is a truism which every one will acknowledge, that no two persons were ever wholly alike; and yet every one starts from the necessary but gloomy corollary, that, therefore, you can never find a counterpart of yourself. And so we go on, desiring, craving, seeking sympathy to the last! It is a melancholy instance, too, of the perversity of human wishes, that they who exact sympathy the most, are, of all, the least likely to obtain it. It is a necessary part of the yearning and wayward temperament of the poet. Exactly as he finds his finer and more subtle visions uncomprehended by the herd, he sighs for the Imagined One to whom he can pour them forth, or who can rather understand them most in silence—by an instinct—by a magnetism—by all that invisible and electric harmony of two souls, which we understand by the word “Sympathy,” in its fullest and divinest sense. Yet in proportion evidently to the rareness of this nature, is the improbability of finding a likeness to it. And if we succeed at last, if we do find another being equally sensitive—equally wayward—equally acute and subtle—instead of sympathising with us, it demands only sympathy for itself. The one most resembling a poet would be a poetess. And a poetess is, of all, the last who could sympathise with a

poet. Two persons linked together, equally self-absorbed, morbid, susceptible, and exacting!—Mephistophiles himself could not devise a union more unhappy and more ill-assorted! It is a strange thing, that those who are most calculated to bear with genius, to be indulgent to its eccentricities and its infirmities, to foresee and forestall its wishes, to honour it with the charity and the reverence of love, are usually without genius themselves, and of an intellect comparatively mediocre and humble. It is the touching anecdote of the wife of a man of genius, that she exclaimed on her death-bed, “Ah, my poor friend, when I am no more, who will understand thee?” Yet this woman, who felt she did comprehend the nature with which her life had been linked, was of no correspondent genius. Biography, that immortalises her tenderness, is silent upon her talents. In fact, there is no real sympathy between the great man and another; but that which supplies its place is the reverent affection of admiration. And I doubt whether the propensity to venerate *persons* be a common faculty of the highest order of the mind. Such men know indeed veneration, their souls are imbued with it; but it is not for *mortals*, over whom they feel their superiority, it is for what are abstract and incorporeal—for Glory or for Virtue—for Wisdom—for Nature, or for God. Even in the greatest men around them, their sight, unhappily too acute, penetrates to the foibles; they measure their fellow-mortals by the standard of their Ideal. They are not blinded by the dazzle of genius, for genius is a thing to them household and familiar. They may pity, but they cannot admire. God and the angels compassionate our frailties, they do not admire our powers. And they who approach the most to the Divine Intelligence, or the Angelic Holiness, behold their brethren from a height; they may stoop from their empyreal air to cherish and to pity, but it is the things above them that they reverence and adore.

It is in a lower class of intellect, yet one not unelevated as compared with the herd, that the principle of admiration is most frequent and pervading; an intellect that seeks a monitor, a protector, a standard or a guide; one that can appreciate greatness, but has no measure within whereby to gauge its proportions. Thus we observe in biography, that the friendship between great men is rarely intimate or permanent: it is a Boswell that most appreciates a Johnson.

Genius has no brother, no co-mate; the love it inspires is that of a pupil or a son. Hence, unconscious of the reasons, but by that fine intuition into nature, which surpasses all philosophy, the poets usually demand devotion, as the most necessary attribute in their ideals of love; they ask in their mistress a being, not of lofty intellect, nor of brilliant genius, but engrossed, absorbed in them;—a Medora for the Conrad. It was well to paint that Medora in a savage island,—to exclude her from the world. In civilised life, poor creature, caps and bonnets—an opera box, and Madame Carson, would soon have shared her heart with her Corsair! Yet this species of love, tender and unearthly though it be, is not sympathy. Conrad could not have confided in Medora. She was the mistress of his heart, not, in the beautiful Arabian phrase, “the keeper of his soul.” It is the inferior natures, then, that appreciate, indulge, reverence, and even comprehend genius the most, and yet how much is there that to inferior natures it can never reveal! How can we pour forth all that burning eloquence of passion and memory which often weighs upon us like a burden, to one who will listen to us indeed with rapt ears, but who will long, as Boswell longed, for Mr. Somebody to be present to hear how finely we can talk?

Yet we have brief passages in life when we fancy we have attained our object; when we cry “Eureka”—when we believe our counterpart, the wraith of our spirit, is before us! Two persons in love with each other, how congenial they appear! In that beautiful pliancy—that unconscious system of self-sacrifice which make the character of love in its earlier stages; each nature seems blended and circumfused in each,—they are not two natures, they are one! Seen by that enchanting moonlight of delicious passion—all that is harsh or dissonant is mellowed down; the irregularities, the angles, sleep in shadow; all that we behold is in harmony with ourselves. Then is our slightest thought penetrated, our faintest desire forestalled, our sufferings of mind, or of frame, how delicately are they consoled! Then even sorrow and sickness have their charm,—they bring us closer under the healing wings of our Guardian Spirit. And, fools that we are, we imagine this sympathy is to endure for ever. But TIME—there is the divider!—by little and little, we grow apart from each

other. The daylight of the world creeps in, the moon has vanished, and we see clearly all the jarring lines and corners hidden at first from our survey. The lady has her objects, and the gentleman his.

My lost, my buried, my unforgotten! You, whom I knew in the first fresh years of life—you, who were snatched from me before one leaf of the Summer of Youth and of love was withered—you, over whose grave, yet a boy, I wept away half the softness of my soul,—now that I know the eternal workings of the world, and the destiny of all human ties, I rejoice that you are no more!—that custom never dulled the music of your voice, the pathos and the magic of your sweet eyes—that the halo of a dream was round you to the last! Had you survived till now, we should have survived—not our love, indeed—but all that renders love most divine—the rapt and wild idolatry that scarce imagined it adored a mortal thing of frailty and of change—the exaggerated, the measureless, credulity in the faith, the virtues, of each other, that almost made us what it believed, in our desire not to fall short of the god-like standard by which we were raised in our mutual eyes above the children of earth. All this,—how long since would it have passed away! our love would have fallen into “the portion of weeds and wornout faces,” which is the lot of all who love. As it is, I can transport myself from every earthly disappointment when I recur to you! On your image there rests no shadow of a shade! In my hours of sickness—in the darkness of despondency—in the fever of petty cares, and all the terrors of the future—you glide before me in your fresh youth, and with your tender smile—for from you never came the harsh word or the wronging thought. In all that I recall of you there is not one memory which I would forget. Death is the great treasure-house of Love. There, lies buried the real wealth of passion and of youth; there, the heart, once so prodigal, now grown the miser, turns to contemplate the hoards it has hidden from the world. Henceforth it is but the common and petty coins of affection, that it wastes on the uses and things of life.

The coarser and blunter minds, intent upon common things, obtain, perhaps, a sufficient sympathy to satisfy them. The man who does nothing but hunt, will find congeniality enough wherever there are hounds and huntsmen.

The woman, whose soul is in a ball-room, has a host of intimate associates and congenial spirits. It was the man of the world who talked of his numerous friends—it was the sage who replied, sadly, "Friends! happy art thou, I have never found one!"

There are two remedies for the craving after sympathy; and the first I recommend to all literary men as the great means of preserving the moral health. It is this: we should cultivate, besides our more intellectual objects, some pursuit which we can have in common with the herd. Some end, whether of pleasure, of business, of politics, that brings us in contact with our kind. It is in this that we can readily find a fellowship—in this we can form a vent for our desire of sympathy from others. And thus we learn to feel ourselves not alone. Solitude then becomes to us a relief, and our finer thoughts are the seraphs that watch and haunt it. Our imagination, kept rigidly from the world, is the Eden in which we walk with God. For having in the crowd embraced the crowd's objects, and met with fellowship in return, we no longer desire so keenly a sympathy with that which is not common to others, and belongs to the nobler part of us. And this brings me to the second remedy. We learn thus to make our own dreams and thoughts our companion, our beloved, our Egeria. We acquire the doctrine of self-dependence,—self suffices to self. In our sleep from the passions of the world, God makes an Eve to us from our own breasts. Yet sometimes it will grieve us to think we shall return to clay, give up the heritage of life, our atoms dissolve and crumble into the elements of new things—with all the most lovely, the most spiritual part of us untold! What volumes can express one tithe that we have felt? How many brilliant thoughts have broken upon us—how many divinest visions have walked by our side, that would have mocked all our efforts to transfer to the inanimate page? To sit coldly down, to copy the fitful and sudden hues of those rainbow and evanescent images varying with every moment!—no! we are not all so cased in authorship, we are greater than mere machines of terms and periods. The author is inferior to the man! As the best part of Beauty is that which no picture can express,* so the best part of the Poet is that

* [The thought here is akin also to that of the Cyprian philosopher Zeno, when he called the "Voice, the Flower of Beauty."]—*Bacon*.

which no words have told. Had Shakspero lived for ever, could he have exhausted his thoughts?

It is a yet harder thought, perhaps, than the reflection which I have just referred to, and which has in it something of vanity—to know how much, for want of sympathy in those around us, our noblest motives, our purest qualities, are misunderstood. We die—none have known us! and yet all are to declaim on our character—measure at a glance the dark abyss of our souls—prate of us as if we were household and hackneyed to them from our cradle. One amongst the number shall write our biography—the rest shall read and conceive they know us ever afterwards. We go down to our son's sons, darkened and disguised; so that, looking on men's colourings of our mind and life, from our repose on the bosom of God, we shall not recognise one feature of the portrait we have left to earth!

ARASMANES ; OR, THE SEEKER.*

CHAPTER I.

IN the broad plains of Chaldæa, and not the least illustrious of those shepherd-sages from whom came our first learning of the lights of heaven, the venerable Chosphor saw his age decline into the grave. Upon his death-bed he thus addressed his only son, the young Arasmanes, in whose piety he recognised, even in that gloomy hour, a consolation and a blessing; and for whose growing renown for wisdom and for valour, the faint pulses of expiring life yet beat with paternal pride.

"Arasmanes," said he, "I am about to impart to you the only secret which, after devoting eighty years to unravel the many mysteries of knowledge, I consider worthy of transmitting to my child. Thou knowest that I have wandered over the distant regions of the world, and have experienced, with all the vicissitudes, some of the triumphs, and many of the pleasures, of life. Learn, from my experience, that earth possesses nothing which can reward the pursuit, or satisfy the desire. When you see the stars shining down upon the waters, you behold an image of the visionary splendours of hope: the light sparkles on the wave; but it neither warms while it glitters, nor can it, for a single instant, arrest the progress of the stream from the dark gulf into which it hastens to merge itself and be lost. It was not till my old age that this conviction grew upon my mind; and about that time I discovered, from one of the sacred books to which my studies were then applied, the secret I am now about to confide to thy ear. Know, my son, that in the extremities of Asia there is a garden in which the God of the Universe placed the first parents of mankind. In that garden the sun never sets; nor does the beauty of the seasons wane. *There*, is neither Ambition, nor Avarice, nor False Hope, nor its child, Regret. *There*, is neither age nor deformity;

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diseases are banished from the air; eternal youth, and the serenity of an unbroken happiness, are the prerogative of all things that breathe therein. For a mystic and unknown sin our first parents were banished from this happy clime, and their children scattered over the earth. Superhuman beings are placed at its portals, and clouds and darkness veil it from the eyes of ordinary men. But, to the virtuous and to the bold, there is no banishment from the presence of God; and by them the darkness may be penetrated, the dread guardians softened, and the portals of the divine land be passed. Thither, then, my son—early persuaded that the rest of earth is paved with sorrow and with care—thither, then, bend thy adventurous way. Fain could I have wished that, in my stronger manhood, when my limbs could have served my will, I had learned this holy secret, and repaired in search of the ancestral clime. Avail thyself of my knowledge; and, in the hope of thy happiness, I shall die contented.” The pious son pressed the hand of his sire, and promised obedience to his last command.

“But, oh, my father!” said he, “how shall I know in what direction to steer my course? To this land, who shall be my guide, or what my clue? Can ship, built by mortal hands, anchor at its coast; or can we say to the camel-driver, ‘Thou art approaching to the goal?’”

The old man pointed to the east.

“From the east,” said he, “dawns the sun—emblem of the progress of the mind’s light; from the east comes all of science that we know. Born in its sultry regions, seek only to pierce to its extreme; and guiding thyself by the stars of heaven ever in one course, reach at last the ADEN that shall reward thy toils.”

And Chosphor died, and was buried with his fathers.

After a short interval of mourning, Arasmanes took leave of his friends: and, turning his footsteps to the east, sought the gates of paradise.

He travelled far, and alone, for several weeks; and the stars were his only guides. By degrees, as he advanced, he found that the existence of Aden was more and more acknowledged. Accustomed from his boyhood to the companionship of sages, it was their abodes that he sought in each town or encampment through which he passed. By them his ardour was confirmed; for they all agreed in

the dim and remote tradition of some beautiful region in the farthest east, from which the existing races of the earth were banished, and which was jealously guarded from profane approach by the wings of the spirits of God. But, if he communicated to any one his daring design, he had the mortification to meet only the smile of derision, or the incredulous gaze of wonder: by some he was thought a madman, and by others an impostor. So that, at last, he prudently refrained from revealing his intentions, and contented himself with seeking the knowledge, and listening to the conjectures of others.

CHAPTER II.

At length the traveller emerged from a mighty forest, through which, for several days, he had threaded his weary way; and beautiful beyond thought was the landscape that broke upon his view. A plain covered with the richest verdure lay before him; through the trees that, here and there, darkened over the emerald ground, were cut alleys, above which hung festoons of many-coloured flowers, whose hues sparkled amidst the glossy foliage, and whose sweets steeped the air as with a bath. A stream, clear as crystal, flowed over golden sands, and wherever the sward was greenest, gathered itself into delicious fountains, and sent upwards its dazzling spray, as if to catch the embraces of the sun, whose beams kissed it in delight.

The wanderer paused in ecstasy; a sense of luxurious rapture, which he had never before experienced, crept into his soul. "Behold!" murmured he, "my task is already done; and Aden, the land of happiness and of youth, lies before me!"

While he thus spake, a sweet voice answered—"Yes, O happy stranger!—thy task is done: this is the land of happiness and of youth!"

He turned, and a maiden of dazzling beauty was by his side. "Enjoy the present," said she, "and so wilt thou defy the future. Ere yet the world was, Love brooded over the unformed shell, till from beneath the shadow of his wings burst forth the life of the young creation. Love, then, is the true God, and whoso serveth him he admits into the mysteries of a temple erected before the stars. Behold! thou enterest now upon the

threshold of the temple; thou art in the land of happiness and youth!"

Enchanted with these words, Arasmanes gave himself up to the sweet intoxication they produced upon his soul. He suffered the nymph to lead him deeper into the valley; and now, from a thousand vistas in the wood, trooped forth beings, some of fantastic, some of the most harmonious, shapes. There, were the satyr and the faun, and the youthful Bacchus—mixed with the multiform deities of India, and the wild objects of Egyptian worship; but more numerous than all were the choral nymphs, that spiritualized the reality, by incorporating the dreams, of beauty; and, wherever he looked, one laughing Face seemed to peer forth from the glossy leaves, and to shed, as from its own joyous yet tender aspect, a tenderness and a joy over all things; and he asked how this Being, that seemed to have the power of multiplying itself everywhere, was called?—And its name was Eros.

For a time the length of which he knew not—for in that land no measurement of time was kept—Arasmanes was fully persuaded that it was Aden to which he had attained. He felt his youth as if it were something palpable; everything was new to him—even in the shape of the leaves, and the whisper of the odorous airs, he found wherewithal to marvel at and admire. Enamoured of the maiden that had first addressed him, at her slightest wish (and she was full of all beautiful caprices), he was ready to explore even the obscurest recess of the valley which now appeared to him unbounded. He never wearied of a single hour. He felt as if weariness were impossible; and, with every instant, he repeated to himself, "In the land of happiness and youth I am a dweller."

One day, as he was conversing with his beloved, and gazing upon her face, he was amazed to behold that, since the last time he had gazed upon it, a wrinkle had planted itself upon the ivory surface of her brow; and, even while half doubting the evidence of his eyes, new wrinkles seemed slowly to form over the forehead, and the transparent roses of her cheek to wane and fade! He concealed, as well as he could, the mortification and wonder that he experienced at this strange phenomenon; and, no longer daring to gaze upon a face from which before he had drunk delight as from a fountain, he sought excuses

to separate himself from her, and wandered, confused and bewildered with his own thoughts, into the wood. The fauns, and the dryads, and the youthful face of Bacchus, and the laughing aspect of Eros, came athwart him from time to time; yet the wonder that had clothed them with fascination was dulled within his breast. Nay, he thought the poor wine-god had a certain vulgarity in his air, and he felt an angry impatience at the perpetual gaiety of Eros.

And now, whenever he met his favourite nymph—who was as the queen of the valley—he had the chagrin to perceive that the wrinkles deepened with every time; youth seemed rapidly to desert her; and instead of a maiden scarcely escaped from childhood, it was an old coquette that he had been so desperately in love with.

One day he could not resist saying to her, though with some embarrassment—

“Pray, dearest, is it many years since you have inhabited this valley?”

“Oh, indeed, many!” said she, smiling.

“You are not, then, very young?” rejoined Arasmanes, ungallantly.

“What!” cried the nymph, changing colour—“Do you begin to discover age in my countenance? Has any wrinkle yet appeared upon my brow? You are silent. Oh, cruel Fate! will you not spare even this lover?” And the poor nymph burst into tears.

“My dear love,” said Arasmanes, painfully, “it is true that time begins to creep upon you; but my friendship shall be eternal.”

Scarcely had he uttered these words, when the nymph, rising, fixed upon him a long, sorrowful look, and, then, with a loud cry, vanished from his sight. Thick darkness, as a veil, fell over the plains; the NOVELTY of life, with its attendant, POETRY, was gone from the wanderer's path for ever.

A sudden sleep crept over his senses. He awoke confused and unrefreshed, and a long and gradual ascent, but over mountains green indeed, and watered by many streams gushing from the heights, stretched before him. Of the valley he had mistaken for Aden not a vestige remained. He was once more on the real and solid earth.

CHAPTER III.

FOR several days, discontented and unhappy, the young adventurer pursued his course, still seeking only the east, and still endeavouring to console himself for the sweet delusions of the past by hoping an Aden in the future.

The evening was still and clear ; the twilight star broke forth over those giant plains—free from the culture and the homes of men, which yet make the character of the eastern and the earlier world ; a narrow stream, emerging from a fissure in a small rock covered with moss, sparkled forth under the light of the solemn heavens, and flowed far away, till lost amongst the gloom of a forest of palms. By the source of this stream sat an aged man and a young female. And the old man was pouring into his daughter's ear—for Azraaph held to Ochtor that holy relationship—the first doctrines of the world's wisdom ; those wild but lofty conjectures by which philosophy penetrated into the nature and attributes of God ; and reverently the young maiden listened, and meekly shone down the star of eve upon the dark yet lustrous beauty of her earnest countenance.

It was at this moment that a stranger was seen descending from the hills that bordered the mighty plains ; and he, too, worn and tired with long travel, came to the stream to refresh his burning thirst, and lave the dust from his brow.

He was not at first aware of the presence of the old man and the maiden ; for they were half concealed beneath the shadow of the rock from which the stream flowed. But the old man, who was one of those early hermits with whom wisdom was the child of solitude, and who, weary with a warring and savage world, had long since retired to a cavern not far from the source of that stream, and dwelt apart with Nature—the memories of a troubled Past, and the contemplation of a mysterious Future,—the old man, I say, accustomed to proffer to the few wanderers that from time to time descended the hills (seeking the cities of the east) the hospitalities of food and shelter, was the first to break the silence.

Arasmanes accepted with thankfulness the offers of the hermit, and that night he became Ochtor's guest. There were many chambers in the cavern, hollowed either by the

hand of Nature, or by some early hunters on the hill; and into one of these the old man, after the Chaldean had refreshed himself with the simple viands of the hermitage, conducted the wanderer: it was covered with dried and fragrant mosses; and the sleep of Arasmanes was long, and he dreamed many cheerful dreams.

When he arose the next morning, he found his entertainers were not within the cavern. He looked forth, and beheld them once more by the source of the stream, on which the morning sun shone, and round which fluttered the happy wings of the desert birds. The wanderer sought his hosts in a spot on which they were accustomed, morning and eve, to address the Deity. "Thou dost not purpose to leave us soon," said the hermit; "for he who descends from yon mountains must have traversed a toilsome way, and his limbs will require rest."

Arasmanes, gazing on the beauty of Azraaph, answered, "In truth, did I not fear that I should disturb thy reverent meditations, the cool of thy plains and quiet of thy cavern, and, more than all, thy converse and kind looks, would persuade me, my father, to remain with thee many days."

"Behold how the wandering birds give life and merriment to the silent stream!" said the sage; "and so to the solitary man are the footsteps of his kind." And Arasmanes sojourned with Ochtor the old man.

CHAPTER IV.

"THIS, then, is thy tale," said Ochtor; "and thou still believest in the visionary Aden of thy father's dreams. Doubtless such a land existed once for our happier sires; or why does tradition preserve it to the race that behold it not? But the shadow wraps it, and the angel guards. Waste not thy life in a pursuit, without a clue, for a goal that thou never mayest attain. Lose not the charm of earth in seeking after the joys of Aden. Tarry with us, my son, in these still retreats. This is the real Aden of which thy father spake; for here comes neither passion nor care. The mortifications and the disappointments of earth fall not upon the recluse. Behold, my daughter hath found favour in thine eyes—she loveth thee—she is beautiful and tender of heart. Tarry with us, my son, and forget the lessons that thy sire, weary with a world which

he yet never had the courage to quit, gave thee from the false wisdom of Discontent."

"Thou art right, venerable Ochtor," cried Arasmanes with enthusiasm; "give me but thy daughter, and I will ask for no other Aden than these plains."

CHAPTER V.

THE sun had six times renewed his course, and Arasmanes still dwelt in the cave of Ochtor. In the fair face of Azraaph he discovered no wrinkles—her innocent love did not pall upon him; the majestic calm of Nature breathed its own tranquillity into his soul, and in the lessons of Ochtor he took a holy delight. He found in his wisdom that which at once stilled the passions and inspired the thoughts. At times, however, and of late more frequently than ever, strong yearnings after the Aden he had so vainly pursued were yet felt. He felt that curse of monotony which is the invariable offspring of quiet.

At the end of the sixth year, as one morning they stood without the door of the cavern, and their herds fed tranquilly around them, a band of men from the western hills came suddenly in view: they were discovered before they had time to consider whether they should conceal themselves; they had no cause, however, for fear—the strangers were desirous only of food and rest.

Foremost of this band was an aged man of majestic mien, and clothed in the richest garments of the east. Loose flowed his purple robe, and bright shone the jewels on the girdle that clasped his sword. As he advanced to accost Ochtor, upon the countenance of each of the old men grew doubt, astonishment, recognition, and joy. "My brother!" burst from the lips of both, and the old chief fell upon Ochtor's bosom and wept aloud. The brothers remained alone the whole day, and at nightfall they parted with many tears; and Zamielides, the son of the chief (who was with the band), knelt to Ochtor, and Ochtor blessed him.

Now, when all were gone, and Silence once more slept upon the plains, Ochtor went forth alone, and Azraaph said unto her husband, "My father's mind seems disquieted and sad; go forth, I pray thee, my beloved, and

comfort him; the dews lie thick upon the grass, and my father is very old."

By the banks of the stream stood Ochtor, and his arms were folded on his breast; the river-horses were heard snorting in the distance, and the wild zebras came to drink at the wave; and the presence of the beasts made more impressive the solitude of the old man.

"Why art thou disquieted, my father?" said Arasmanes.

"Have I not parted with my near of kin?"

"But thou didst never hope to meet them; and are not thy children left thee?"

Ochtor waved his hand with an unwonted impatience.

"Listen to me, Arasmanes. Know that Zamiel and I were brothers. Young and ardent, each of us aspired to rule our kind, and each of us imagined he had the qualities that secure command; but mark, *my* arm was the stronger in the field, and *my* brain was the subtler in the council. We toiled and schemed, and rose into repute among our tribe, but Envy was busy with our names. Our herds were seized—we were stripped of our rank—we were degraded to the level of our slaves. Then, disgusted with my race, I left their cities, and in these vast solitudes I forgot ambition in content. But my brother was of more hopeful heart; with a patient brow he veiled the anger he endured. Lo, he hath been rewarded! His hour came—he gathered together his friends in secret—he smote our enemies in the dead of night; and at morning, behold, he was hailed chieftain of the tribe. This night he rides with his son to the king of the City of Golden Palaces, whose daughter that son is about to wed. Had I not weakly renounced my tribe—had I not fled hither, that glorious destiny would have been mine; I should have been the monarch of my race, and my daughter have matched with kings. Marvellest thou, now, that I am disquieted, or that my heart is sore within me?"

And Arasmanes saw that the sage had been superior to the world, only while he was sickened of the world.

And Ochtor nourished the discontent he had formed to his dying day; and, within three months from that night, Arasmanes buried him by the source of the solitary stream.

CHAPTER VI.

THE death of Ochtor, and his previous confession, deeply affected Arasmanes. He woke as from a long sleep. Solitude had lost its spell; and he perceived that inactivity itself may be the parent of remorse. "If," thought he, "so wise, so profound a mind as that of Ochtor was thus sensible to the memories of ambition—if, on the verge of death, he thus regretted the solitude in which he had buried his years, and felt, upon the first tidings from the great world, that he had wasted the promise and powers of life, how much more accessible should I be to such feelings, in the vigour of manhood, and with the one great object which I swore to my father to pursue, unattained, and scarcely attempted? Surely it becomes me to lose no longer time in these houseless wastes; but to rise and gird up my loins, and seek with Azraaph, my wife, for that Aden which we will enter together!"

These thoughts soon ripened into resolve; and not the less so in that, Ochtor being dead, Arasmanes had now no companion for his loftier and more earnest thoughts. Azraaph was beautiful and gentle; but the moment he began to talk about the stars, she unaffectedly yawned in his face. She was quite contented with the solitude, for she knew of no other world; and the herds and the streamlet, and every old bush around the cavern, were society to her; but her content, as Arasmanes began to discover, was that of ignorance, and not of wisdom.

Azraaph wept bitterly on leaving the cavern; but by degrees as they travelled slowly on, the novelty of what they saw reconciled her to change; and, except at night, when she was weary of spirit, she ceased to utter her regrets for the stream and the quiet cave. They travelled eastward for several weeks, and met with no living thing by the way, save a few serpents, and a troop of wild horses. At length one evening, they found themselves in the suburbs of a splendid city. As they approached the gates they drew back, dazzled with the lustre, for the gates were of burnished gold, which shone bright and glittering as they caught a sunny light from the lamps of naphtha that hung frequent, from the mighty walls.

They inquired, as they passed the gates, the name of the city; and they heard with some surprise, and more joy, that it was termed, "The City of Golden Palaces."

"Here, then," cried Azraaph, "we shall be well received; for the son of my father's brother is wedded to the daughter of the king."

"And here, then, will be many sages," thought Arasmanes, "who will, doubtless, have some knowledge of the true situation of Aden."

They were much struck, as they proceeded through the streets, with the bustle, and life, and animation, that reigned around, even at that late hour. With the simplicity natural to persons who had lived so long in a desert, they inquired at once for the king's palace. The first time Arasmanes asked the question, it was of a young lord, who, very sumptuously dressed, was treading the streets with great care, lest he should soil the hem of his robe. The young lord looked at him with grave surprise, and passed on. The next person he asked was a rude boor, who was carrying a bundle of wood on his shoulders. The boor laughed in his face; and Arasmanes, indignant at the insult, struck him to the ground. There then came by a judge, and Arasmanes asked him the same question.

"The king's palace!" said the judge; "and what want ye with the king's palace?"

"Behold, the daughter of the king is married to my wife's cousin."

"Thy wife's consin! Thou art mad to say it; yet stay, thou lookest poor, friend" (here the judge frowned terribly). "Thy garments are scanty and worn. I fancy thou hast neither silver nor gold."

"Thou sayest right," replied Arasmanes; "I have neither."

"Ho, ho!" quoth the judge; "he confesses his guilt; he owns that he has neither silver nor gold. Here, soldiers, seize this man and woman. Away with them to prison; and let them be brought up for sentence of death to-morrow. We will then decide whether they shall be hanged or starved. The wretches have, positively, neither silver nor gold; and, what is worse, they own it!"

"Is it possible!" cried the crowd; and a shudder of horror crept through the by-standers. "Away with them! —away with them! Long life to Judge Kaly, whose eye

never sleeps, and who preserves us for ever from the poor ! ”

The judge walked on, shedding tears of virtuous delight at the reputation he had acquired.

Arasmanes and Azraaph were hurried off to prison, where Azraaph cried herself to sleep, and Arasmanes, with folded arms and downcast head, indulged his meditations on the very extraordinary notions of crime that seemed common to the sons of the City of Golden Palaces. They were disturbed the next morning by loud shouts beneath the windows of the prison. Nothing could equal the clamour that they heard ; but it seemed the clamour of joy. In fact, that morning the princess who had married Azraaph's cousin had been safely brought to bed of her first child ; and great was the joy and the noise throughout the city. Now, it was the custom of that country, whenever any one of the royal family was pleased to augment the population of the world, for the father of the child to go round to all the prisons in the city, and release the prisoners. What good fortune of Arasmanes and Azraaph, that the princess had been brought to bed before they were hanged !

And, by-and-by, amidst cymbal and psalter, with banners above him and spears around, came the young father to the gaol, in which our unfortunate couple were confined.

“ Have you any extraordinary criminals in your prison ? ” asked the prince, of the head gaoler : for he was studying at that time, to be affable.

“ Only one man, my lord, who was committed last night ; and who absolutely confessed in cold blood, and without torture, that he had neither silver nor gold. It is a thousand pities that such a miscreant should be suffered to go free ! ”

“ You are right,” said the prince ; “ and what impudence to confess his guilt ! I should like to see so remarkable a criminal.”

So saying, the prince dismounted, and followed the gaoler to the cell in which Arasmanes and his wife were confined. They recognised their relation at once ; for, in that early age of the world, people in trouble had a wonderfully quick memory in recollecting relatives in power. Azraaph ran to throw herself on the prince's neck (which the guards quickly prevented), and the stately Arasmanes began to utter his manly thanks for the visit.

"These people are mad," cried the prince hastily. "Release them; but let me escape first." So saying, he ran down stairs so fast that he nearly broke his neck; and then, mounting his horse, pursued his way to the other prisons, amidst the shouts of the people.

Arasmanes and Azraaph were now turned out into the streets. They were exceedingly hungry; and they went into the first baker's shop they saw, and asked the rites of hospitality.

"Certainly; but your money first," said the baker.

Arasmanes, made wise by experience, took care not to reply that he had no money; "But," said he, "I have left it behind me at my lodging. Give me the bread now, and lo, I will repay thee to-morrow."

"Very well," said the baker; "but that sword of yours has a handsome hilt: leave it with me till you return with the monies."

So Arasmanes took the bread, and left the sword.

They were now refreshed, and resolved to hasten from so dangerous a city, when, just as they turned into a narrow street, they were suddenly seized by six soldiers, blindfolded, gagged, and hurried away, whither they knew not. At last they found themselves ascending a flight of stairs. A few moments more, and the bandages were removed from their mouths and eyes, and they saw themselves in a gorgeous chamber, and alone in the presence of the prince, their cousin.

He embraced them tenderly. "Forgive me," said he, "for appearing to forget you; but it was as much as my reputation was worth in this city to acknowledge relations who confessed to have neither silver nor gold. By the beard of my grandfather, how could you be so imprudent? Do you not know that you are in a country in which the people worship only one deity—the god of the precious metals? Not to have the precious metals is not to have virtue; to confess it, is to be an atheist. No power could have saved you from death, either by hanging or starvation, if the princess, my wife, had not been luckily brought to bed to-day."

"What a strange—what a barbarous country!" said Arasmanes.

"Barbarous!" echoed the prince; "this is the most civilised people in the world,—nay, the whole world ac-

knowledges it. In no country are the people so rich, and, therefore, so happy. For those who have no money it is, indeed, a bad place of residence; for those who have, it is the land of happiness itself. Yes, it is the true Aden."

"Aden! What then, you, too, have heard of Aden?"

"Surely! and this is it—the land of freedom—of happiness — of gold!" cried the prince, with enthusiasm: "remain with us and see."

"Without doubt," thought Arasmanes, "this country lies in the far east; it has received me inhospitably at first; but perhaps the danger I escaped was but the type and allegorical truth of the sworded angel of which tradition hath spoken." "But," said he, aloud, "I have no gold, and no silver, O my prince!"

"Heed not that," answered the kind Zamielides: "I have enough for all. You shall be provided for this very day."

"But will not the people recognise me as the poor stranger?"

The prince laughed for several minutes so loudly that they feared he was going into fits.

"What manner of man art thou, Arasmanes?" said he, when he was composed enough to answer; "the people of this city never know what a man has been when he is once rich? Appear to-morrow in purple, and they will never dream that they saw thee yesterday in rags."

CHAPTER VII.

THE kind Zamielides, then, conducting his cousins into his own chamber, left them to attire themselves in splendid garments, which he had ordered to be prepared for them. He gave them a palace and large warehouses of merchandise.

"Behold," said he, taking Arasmanes to the top of a mighty tower which overlooked the sea,— "behold yonder ships that rise like a forest of masts from that spacious harbour; the six vessels with the green flags are thine. I will teach thee the mysteries of Trade, and thou wilt soon be as wealthy as myself."

"And what is Trade, my lord?" said Arasmanes.

"It is the worship that the people of this country pay to their god," answered the prince.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARASMANES was universally courted ; so wise, so charming a person had never appeared in the City of Golden Palaces ; and as to the beauty of Azraaph, it was declared the very masterpiece of Nature. Intoxicated with the homage they received, and the splendour in which they lived, their days glided on in a round of luxurious enjoyment.

"Right art thou, O Zamielides!" cried Arasmanes, as his ships returned with new treasure ; "the City of Golden Palaces is the true Aden."

CHAPTER IX.

ARASMANES had now been three years in the city ; and you might perceive that a great change had come over his person : the hues of health had faded from his cheeks : his brow was care-worn—his step slow—his lips compressed. He no longer thought that he lived in the true Aden ; and yet for Aden itself he would scarcely have quitted the City of Golden Palaces. Occupied solely with the task of making and spending money, he was consumed with the perpetual fear of losing, and the perpetual anxiety to increase his stock. He trembled at every darker cloud that swept over the heavens ; he turned pale at every ruder billow that agitated the sea. He lived a life of splendid care : and the pleasures which relieved it were wearisome because of their sameness. He saw but little of his once idolised Azraaph. Her pursuits divided her from him. In so civilised a country they could not be always together. If he spoke of his ships, he wearied her to death ; if she spoke of the festivals she had adorned, he was equally tired of the account.

CHAPTER X.

THE court was plunged in grief. Zamielides was seized with a fever. All the wise men attended him ; but he turned his face to the wall and died. Arasmanes mourned for him more sincerely than any one ; for, besides that Arasmanes had great cause to be grateful to him, he knew, also, that if any accident happened to his vessels, he had now no friend willing to supply the loss. This made him more anxious than ever about the safety of his wealth. A year after this event, the new king of the City of Golden

Palaces thought fit to go to war. The war lasted four years; and two millions of men were killed on all sides. The second year Arasmanes was at a splendid banquet given at the court. A messenger arrived, panting and breathless. A great battle at sea had been fought. Ten thousand of the king's subjects had been killed.

"But who won the battle?" cried the king.

"Your majesty."

The air was rent with shouts of joy.

"One little accident only," continued the herald, "happened the next day. Three of the scattered war ships of the enemy fell in with the vessels of some of our merchants returning from Ophir, laden with treasure, and, in revenge, they burned and sunk them."

"Were my ships of the number?" asked Arasmanes, with faltering tongue.

"It was of thy ships that I spoke," answered the messenger.

But nobody thought of Arasmanes, or of the ten thousand subjects that were killed. The city was out of its wits with joy that his majesty had won the victory.

"Alas! I am a ruined man!" said Arasmanes, as he sat with ashes on his head.

"And we can give no more banquets," sighed his wife.

"And everybody will trample upon us," said Arasmanes.

"And we must give up our palace," groaned the tender Azraaph.

"But one ship remains to me!" cried Arasmanes, starting up; "it is now in port. I will be its captain. I will sail myself with it to Ophir. I will save my fortunes, or perish in the attempt."

"And I will accompany thee, my beloved," exclaimed Azraaph, flinging herself on his neck; "*for* I cannot bear the pity of the wives whom I have outshone!"

The sea was calm, and the wind favourable when the unfortunate pair entered their last ship; and, for a whole week, the gossip at court was of the folly of Arasmanes, and the devotion of his wife.

CHAPTER XI.

THEY had not been many weeks at sea, before an adverse wind set in, which drove them out of their destined course.

They were beaten eastward, and, at length, even the oldest and most experienced of the mariners confessed they had entered seas utterly unknown to them. Worn and wearied, when their water was just out, and their provisions exhausted, they espied land, and, at nightfall the ship anchored on a green and pleasant shore. The inhabitants, half-naked, and scarce escaped from the first savage state of nature, ran forth to meet and succour them: by mighty fires the seamen dried their wet garments, and forgot the hardships they had endured. They remained several days with the hospitable savages, repaired their vessel, and replenished its stores. But what especially attracted the notice of Arasmanes, was the sight of some precious diamonds which, in a rude crown, the chief of the savages wore on his head. He learned from signs easy of interpretation, that these diamonds abounded in a certain island in the farthest east; and that from time to time large fragments of rock in which they were imbedded were cast upon the shore. But when Arasmanes signified his intention to seek this island, the savages, by gestures of horror and dismay, endeavoured to denote the dangers that attended the enterprise, and to dissuade him from attempting it. Naturally bold, and consumed with his thirst for wealth, these signs made but little impression upon the Chaldæan; and one fair morning he renewed his voyage. Steering perpetually towards the east, and with favouring winds, they came, on the tenth day, in sight of an enormous rock, which shone far down over the waters with so resplendent a glory, as to dazzle the eyes of the seamen. Diamond and ruby, emerald and carbuncle, glittered from the dark soil of the rock, and promised to the heart of the humblest mariner the assurance of illimitable wealth. Never was human joy more ecstatic than that of the crew as the ship neared the coast. The sea was in this place narrow and confined, the opposite shore was also in view—black, rugged, and herbless, with pointed rocks, round which the waves sent their white foam on high, guarding its drear approach: little recked they, however, of the opposite shore, as their eyes strained towards “The Island of Precious Stones.” They were in the middle of the strait, when suddenly the waters became agitated and convulsed; the vessel rocked to and fro; something glittering appeared beneath the surface; and at

length, they distinctly perceived the scales and tail of an enormous serpent.

Thereupon a sudden horror seized the whole crew; they recognised the truth of that tradition, known to all seamen, that in the farthest east lived the vast Snake of the Ocean, whose home no vessel ever approached without destruction. All thought of the diamond rock faded from their souls. They fell at once upon their knees, and poured forth unconscious prayers. But high above all rose the tall form of Arasmanes: little cared he for serpent or tradition. Fame, and fortune, and life, were set upon one cast. "Rouse thee!" said he, spurning the pilot, "or we drive upon the opposite shore. Behold, the island of inexhaustible wealth glows upon us!"

Scarce had the words left his lips, when, with a slow and fearful hiss, the serpent of the eastern seas reared his head from the ocean. Dark and huge as the vastest cavern in which ghoul or Afrite ever dwelt was the abyss of his jaws, and the lurid and terrible eyes outshone even the lustre of the diamond rock.

"I defy thee!" cried Arasmanes, waving his sword above his head; when suddenly the ship whirled round and round; the bold Chaldæan was thrown with violence on the deck; he felt the waters whirl and blacken over him: and then all sense of life deserted him.

When he came to himself, Arasmanes was lying on the hot sands of the shore opposite to the Diamond Isle; wrecks of the vessel were strewn around him, and here and there the dead bodies of his seamen. But at his feet lay, swollen and distorted, the shape of his beautiful Azraaph, the sea-weeds twisted round her limbs, and the deformed shell-fish crawling over her long hair. And tears crept into the eyes of the Chaldæan, and all his old love for Azraaph returned, and he threw himself down beside her mangled remains, and tore his hair; the schemes of the later years were swept away from his memory like visions, and he remembered only the lone cavern and his adoring bride.

Time rolled on, and Azraaph was buried in the sands; Arasmanes tore himself from the solitary grave, and, striking into the interior of the coast, sought once more to discover the abodes of men. He travelled far and beneath burning suns, and at night he surrounded his resting-

places with a circle of fire, for the wild beasts and the mighty serpents were abroad : scant and unwholesome was the food he gleaned from the berries and rank roots that now and then were visible in the drear wastes through which he passed ; and in this course of hardship and travail he held commune with his own heart. He felt as if cured for ever of the evil passions. Avarice seemed gone from his breast, and he dreamed that no unholy desire could succeed to its shattered throne.

One day, afar off in the desert, he descried a glittering cavalcade—glittering it was indeed, for the horsemen were clad in armour of brass and steel, and the hot sun reflected the array like the march of a river of light. Arasmanes paused, and his heart swelled high within him as he heard through the wide plains the martial notes of the trumpet and the gong, and recognised the glory and pomp of war.

The cavalcade swept on ; and the chief who rode at the head of the band paused as he surveyed with admiration the noble limbs, and proud stature, and dauntless eye of the Chaldæan. The chief summoned his interpreters ; and in that age the languages of the east were but slightly dissimilar ; so that the chief of the warriors conversed easily with the adventurer. " Know," said he, " that we are bent upon the most glorious enterprise ever conceived by the sons of men. In the farthest east there is a land of which thy fathers may have informed thee—a land of perpetual happiness and youth, and its name is Aden." Arasmanes started ; he could scarce believe his ears. The warrior continued—" We are of that tribe which lies to the extremities of the east, and this land is therefore a heritage which we, of all the earth, have the right to claim. Several of our youth have at various times attempted to visit it, but supernatural agents have repelled the attempt. Now, therefore, that I have succeeded to the throne of my sires, I have resolved to invade and to conquer it by force of arms. Survey my band. Sawest thou ever, O Chaldæan, men of such limbs and stature, of such weapons of offence, and shields of proof ? Canst thou conceive men more worthy of such a triumph, or more certain to attain it ? Thou, too, art of proportions beyond the ordinary strength of men—thou art deserving to be one of us. Come, say the word, and the

armourers shall clothe thee in steel, and thou shalt ride at my right hand."

The neighing of the steeds, and the clangour of the music, and the proud voice of the chieftain, all inspired the blood of Arasmanes. He thought not of the impiety of the attempt—he thought only of the glory: the object of his whole life seemed placed within his reach. He grasped at the offer of the warrior; and the armourer clad him in steel, and the ostrich plume waved over his brow, and he rode at the right hand of the warrior-king.

CHAPTER XII.

THE armament was not without a guide; for, living so near unto the rising of the sun, what with others was tradition, with them was knowledge; and many amongst them had travelled to the site of Aden, and looked upon the black cloud that veiled it, and trembled at the sound of the rushing but invisible wings that hovered over.

Arasmanes confided to the warrior his whole history; they swore eternal friendship; and the army looked upon the Chaldæan as a man whom God had sent to their assistance. For, what was most strange, not one of the army ever seemed to imagine there was aught unholy or profane in the daring enterprise in which they had enlisted: accustomed to consider bloodshed a virtue, where was the crime of winning the gardens of Paradise by force?

Through wastes and deserts they held their way: and, though their numbers thinned daily by fatigue, and the lack of food, and the fiery breath of the burning winds, they seemed not to relax in their ardour, nor to repine at the calamities they endured.

CHAPTER XIII.

DARKNESS gloomed like a wall! From heaven to earth stretched the palpable and solid Night that was the barrier to the land of Aden. No object gleamed through the impenetrable blackness; from those summitless walls hung no banner; no human champion frowned before the drear approach: all would have been silence, save that, at times,

they heard the solemn rush as of some mighty sea; and they knew that it was the rush of the guardian wings.

The army halted before the Darkness, mute and awed; their eyes recoiled from the gloom, and rested upon the towering crest and snowy plumage of their chief. And he bade them light the torches of naphtha that they had brought with them, and unsheath their swords; and, at the given sound, horseman and horse dashed in through the walls of Night. For one instant, the torches gleamed and sparkled amidst the darkness, and were then suddenly extinguished; but through the gloom came one gigantic Hand wielding a sword of flame; and, wherever it turned, man smote the nearest man—father perished by his son—and brother fell gasping by the death-stroke of his brother; shrieks and cries, and the trample of affrighted steeds, rang through the riven shade—riven only by that mighty sword as it waved from rank to rank, and the gloom receded from its rays.

CHAPTER XIV.

AT eve the work was done; a small remnant of the warriors, alone escaped from the general slaughter, lay exhausted upon the ground before the veil of Aden. Arasmanes was the last who lingered in the warring gloom; for, as he lay struggling beneath the press of dying and dead, the darkness had seemed to roll away, and, far into its depths, he caught one glimpse of the wonderful loveliness of Aden. There, over valleys covered with the greenest verdure, and watered by rivers without a wave, basked a purpling and loving sunlight that was peaceful and cloudless, for it was the smile of God. And there were groups of happy beings scattered around, in whose faces was the serenity of unutterable joy; even at the mere aspect of their happiness—happiness itself was reflected upon the soul of the Chaldean, despite the dread, the horror, and the desolation of the hour. He stretched out his arms imploringly, and the vision faded for ever from his sight.

CHAPTER XV.

THE king and all the principal chiefs of the army were no more; and, with one consent, Arasmanes was proclaimed

their leader. Sorrowful and dejected, he conducted the humbled remnant of the troop back through the deserts to the land they had so rashly left. Thrice on their return they were attacked by hostile tribes, but by the valour and prudence of Arasmanes they escaped the peril. They arrived at their native city to find that the brother of their chief had seized the reins of government. The army, who hated him, declared for the stranger-chief who had led them home. And Arasmanes, hurried away by the prospect of power, consented to their will. A battle ensued ; the usurper was slain ; and Arasmanes, a new usurper, ascended the throne in his stead.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE Chaldean was no longer young ; the hardships he had undergone in the desert had combined with the anxieties that had preyed upon him during his residence in the City of Golden Palaces to plant upon his brow, and in his heart, the furrows of untimely age. He was in the possession of all the sources of enjoyment at that period when we can no longer enjoy. Howbeit, he endeavoured to amuse himself by his divan of justice, from which every body went away dissatisfied, and his banquets, at which the courtiers complained of his want of magnificence, and the people of his profligate expense. Grown wise by experience, he maintained his crown by flattering his army ; and, surrounded by luxury, felt himself supported by power.

There came to the court of Arasmanes a strange traveller ; he was a little old man, of plain appearance but great wisdom ; in fact, he was one of the most noted sages of the East. His conversation, though melancholy, had the greatest attraction for Arasmanes, who loved to complain to him of the cares of royalty, and the tediousness of his life.

"Ah, how much happier are those in an humble station !" said the king ; "how much happier was I in the desert-cave, tending my herds, and listening to the sweet voice of Azraaph !—Would that I could recall those days !"

"I can enable you to do so, great king !" said the sage ; "behold this mirror ; gaze on it whenever you desire to recall the past ; and whatever portion of the past you wish to summon to your eyes shall appear before you."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE sage did not deceive Arasmanes. The mirror reflected all the scenes through which the Chaldæan had passed: now he was at the feet of Chospor, a happy boy—now with elastic hopes entering into the enchanted valley of the Nymph ere yet he learned how her youth could fade—now he was at the source of the little stream, and gazing on the face of Azraaph by the light of the earliest star; whichever of these scenes he wished to live over again reflected itself vividly in the magic mirror. Surrounded by pomp and luxury in the present, his only solace was in the past.

"You see that I was right," said he to the sage: "I was much happier in those days; else why so anxious to renew them?"

"Because, O great king!" said the sage, with a bitter smile, "you see them without recalling the feelings you then experienced as well as the scenes; you gaze on the past with the feelings you *now* possess, and all that then made the prospect clouded, is softened away by time. Judge for yourself if I speak true." So saying, the sage breathed over the mirror, and bade Arasmanes look into it once more. He did so. He beheld the same scenes, but the illusion was gone from them. He was a boy once more; but restlessness, and anxiety, and a thousand petty cares at his heart: he was again in the cave with Azraaph, but secretly pining at the wearisome monotony of his life: in all those scenes he now imagined the happiest, he perceived that he had not enjoyed the *present*; he had been looking forward to the future, and the dream of the unattainable Aden was at his heart. "Alas!" said he, dashing the mirror into pieces, "I was deceived; and thou hast destroyed for me, O sage, even the pleasure of the past!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

ARASMANES never forgot the brief glimpse of Aden that he had obtained in his impious warfare; and, now that the charm was gone from Memory, the wish yet to reach the unconquered land returned more powerfully than ever to his mind. He consulted the sage as to its possibility.

"Thou canst make but one more attempt," answered the wise man; and in that I cannot assist thee: but one

who, when I am gone hence, will visit thee, shall lend thee her aid."

"Cannot the visitor come till thou art gone?" said Arasmanes.

"No, nor until my death," answered the sage.

This reply threw the mind of Arasmanes into great confusion. It was true that he nowhere found so much pleasure as in the company of his friend—it was his only solace; but then, if he could never visit Aden (the *object* of his whole life) until that friend were dead!—the thought was full of affliction to him. He began to look upon the sage as an enemy, as an obstacle between himself and the possession of his wishes. He inquired every morning into the health of the sage; he seemed most provokingly strong. At length, from wishes for his death, dark thoughts came upon the Chaldean; and he resolved to expedite it. One night the sage was found dead in his bed; he had been strangled by order of the king.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE very next day, as the king sat in his divan, a great noise was heard without the doors; and, presently, a hag, dressed in white garments of a foreign fashion, and of a hideous and revolting countenance, broke away from the crowd and made up to the king: "They would not let me come to thee, because I am homely and aged," said she in a shrill and discordant voice; "but I have been in a king's court before now——"

"What wantest thou, woman?" said Arasmanes; and he felt, as he spake, a chill creep to his heart.

"I am that visitor of which the wise man spake," said she; "and I would talk to thee alone."

Arasmanes felt impelled as by some mighty power which he could not withstand; he rose from his throne, the assembly broke up in surprise, and the hag was admitted alone to the royal presence.

"Thou wouldst re-seek Aden, the land of Happiness and Truth?" said she, with a ghastly smile.

"Ay," said the king, and his knees knocked together.

"I will take thee thither."

"And when?"

"To-morrow, if thou wilt!" and the hag laughed aloud.

There was something in the manner, the voice, and the appearance of this creature so disgusting to Arasmanes, that he could brook it no longer. Aden itself seemed not desirable with such a companion and guide.

Without vouchsafing a reply he hastened from the apartment, and commanded his guards to admit the hag no more to the royal presence.

The sleep of Arasmanes that night was unusually profound, nor did he awaken on the following day till late at noon. From that hour he felt as if some strange revolution had taken place in his thoughts. He was no longer desirous of seeking Aden: whether or not the apparition of the hag had given him a distaste of Aden itself, certain it was that he felt the desire of his whole life had vanished entirely from his breast; and his only wish now was to enjoy, as long and as heartily as he was able, the pleasures that were within his reach.

"What a fool have I been," said he aloud, "to waste so many years in wishing to leave the earth! Is it only in my old age that I begin to find how much that is agreeable earth can possess?"

"Come, come, come!" cried a shrill voice; and Arasmanes, startled, turned round to behold the terrible face of the hag.

"Come!" said she, stamping her foot; "I am ready to conduct thee to Aden."

"Wretch!" said the king, with quivering lips, "how didst thou baffle my guards? But I will strangle every one of them."

"Thou hast had enough of strangling," answered the trone, with a malignant glare. "Hast thou not strangled thy dearest friend?"

"What! tauntest thou me?" cried the king; and he rushed at the hag with his lifted sabre: the blade cut the air: the hag had shunned the blow; and, at the same moment, coming behind the king, she clasped him round the body, and fixed her long talons in his breast; through the purple robe, through the jewelled vest, pierced those vulture-fangs, and Arasmanes shrieked with terror and pain. The guards rushed in at the sound of his cry.

"Villains!" said he, as the cold drops broke from his brow, "would you leave me here to be murdered? Hew

down yon hell hag; her death can only preserve life to you!"

"We saw her enter not, O king!" said the chief of the guards, amazed; "but she shall now die the death." The soldiers, with one accord, made at the crone, who stood glaring at them like a hunted tigress.

"Fools!" said she, "know that I laugh alike at stone walls and armed men."

They heard the voice—they saw not whence it came—the hag had vanished.

CHAPTER XX.

THE wound which the talons of this horrible visitor had made in the breast of the king refused to heal: it gave him excruciating anguish. The physicians tended him in vain; in vain, too, did the wise men preach patience and hope to him. What incensed him even more than the pain was the insult he had suffered—that such a loathsome and obscene wretch should dare to maim the person of a king!—the thought was not to be borne. But the more pain the king suffered, the more did he endeavour to court pleasure: life never seemed so charming to him as at the moment when it became an agony. His favourite courtiers, who had been accustomed to flatter his former weakness, and to converse with him about the happiness of Aden, and the possibility of entering it, found that even to broach the subject threw their royal master into a paroxysm of rage. He foamed at the mouth at the name of Aden—he wished, nay, he endeavoured to believe, that there was no such place in the universe.

CHAPTER XXI.

AT length one physician, more sanguine than the rest, assured the king that he was able to cure the wound and relieve the pain.

"Know, O king!" said he, "that in the stream of Athron, which runneth through the valley of Mythra, there is a mystic virtue which can cure all the diseases of kings. Thou hast only to enter thy gilded bark, and glide down the stream for the space of twenty roods, scattering thine offering of myrrh and frankincense on the waters, in order to be well once more. Let the king live for ever!"

CHAPTER XXII.

It was a dark, deep, and almost waveless stream ; and the courtiers, and the women, and the guards, and the wise men, gathered round the banks ; and the king, leaning on the physician, ascended his gilded bark ; and the physician alone entered the vessel with him. "For," said he, "the god of the stream loves it not to be profaned by the vulgar crowd ; it is for kings only that it possesses its healing virtue."

So the king reclined in the middle of the vessel, and the physician took the censer of the precious odours ; and the bark drifted down the stream, as the crowd wept and prayed upon the shore.

"Either my eyes deceive me," said the king, faintly, "or the stream seems to expand supernaturally, as into a great sea, and the shores on either side fade into distance."

"It is so," answered the physician. "And seest thou yon arch of black rocks flung over the tide?"

"Ay," answered the king.

"It is the approach to the land thou hast so often desired to reach : it is the entrance into Aden."

"Dog!" cried the king, passionately, "name not to me that hateful word."

As he spoke, the figure of the false physician shrunk in size ; his robes fell from him,—and the king beheld in his stead the dwarfish shape of the accursed hag.

On drifted the vessel ; and the crowd on the banks now beheld the hag seize the king in a close embrace : his shriek was wafted over the water, while the gorgeous vessel with its silken streamers and gilded sides, sped rapidly through the black arch of rocks : as the bark vanished, the chasm of the arch closed in, and the rocks uniting, presented a solid barrier to their gaze. But they shudderingly heard the ghastly laugh of the hag, piercing through the barrier, as she uttered the one word—"NEVER !" And from that hour the king was seen no more.

And this is the true history of Arasmanes, the Chaldæan.

ON ILL HEALTH,

AND ITS CONSOLATIONS.



WE do not enough consider our physical state as the cause of much of our moral—we do not reflect enough upon our outward selves:—What changes have been produced in our minds by some external cause—an accident—an illness! For instance, a general state of physical debility—ILL HEALTH in the ordinary phrase—is perhaps among the most interesting subjects whereon to moralise. It is not, like most topics that are dedicated to philosophy, refining and abstruse; it is not a closet thesis—it does not touch *one* man, and avoid the circle which surrounds him;—it relates to us all—for ill health is a part of Death;—it is its grand commencement. Sooner or later, for a longer period or a shorter, it is our common doom. Some, indeed, are stricken suddenly, and Disease does not herald the Dread Comer; but such exceptions are not to be classed against the rule; and in this artificial existence, afflicted by the vices of custom—the unknown infirmities of our sires—the various ills that beset all men who think or toil—the straining nerve—the heated air—the overwrought or the stagnant life—the cares of poverty—the luxuries of wealth—the gnawings of our several passions,—the string cracks somewhere, and few of us pass even the first golden gates of Life ere we receive the admonitions of Decay. “Every contingency to every man and every creature doth preach our funeral sermon, and calls us to look and see how the old Sexton Time throws up the earth and digs a grave where we must lay our sins, or our sorrows.”

Life itself is but a long dying, and with every struggle against disease “we taste the grave and the solemnities of our own funerals. Every day’s necessity calls for a repa-ration of that portion which Death fed on all night when we lay on his lap, and slept in his outer chambers.”*

* Jeremy Taylor on “Holy Dying.”

As the beautiful mind of Tully taught itself to regard the evils of Old Age, by fairly facing its approach, and weighing its sufferings against its consolations, so, with respect to habitual infirmities, we may the better bear them by recollecting that they are not without their solace. Every one of us must have observed that during a lengthened illness the mind acquires the habit of making to itself a thousand sources of interest—"a thousand images of one that was"—out of that quiet monotony which seems so unvaried to ordinary eyes. We grow usually far more susceptible to commonplace impressions:—As one whose eyes are touched by a fairy spell, a new world opens to us out of the surface of the tritest things. Every day we discover new objects, and grow delighted with our progress. I remember a friend of mine—a man of lively and impetuous imagination—who, being afflicted with a disease which demanded the most perfect composure,—not being allowed to read, write, and very rarely to converse,—found an inexhaustible mine of diversion in an old marble chimney-piece, in which the veins, irregularly streaked, furnished forth quaint and broken likenesses to men, animals, trees, &c. He declared that, by degrees, he awoke every morning with an object before him, and his imagination betook itself instantly to its new realm of discovery. This instance of the strange power of the mind, to create to itself an interest in the narrowest circles to which it may be confined, may be ludicrous, but is not exaggerated. How many of us have watched for hours, with half-shut eyes, the embers of the restless fire?—nay, counted the flowers upon the curtains of the sick-bed, and found an interest in the task! The mind has no native soil; its affections are not confined to one spot; its dispositions fasten themselves every where,—they live, they thrive, they produce, in whatever region Chance may cast them, however remote from their accustomed realm. God made the human heart weak, but elastic; it hath a strange power of turning poison into nutriment. Banish us the air of heaven—cripple the step—bind us to the sick couch—cut us off from the cheerful face of men—make us keep house with Danger and with Darkness—we can yet play with our own fancies, and after the first bitterness of the physical thralldom, feel that despite of it we are free!

It has been my lot to endure frequent visitations of ill health, although my muscular frame is not incapable of bearing great privation and almost any exertion of mere bodily fatigue. The reason is that I reside principally in London; and it is only of late that I have been able to inure myself to the close air and the want of exercise that belong to the life of cities. However languishing in the confinement of a metropolis, the moment I left the dull walls, and heard the fresh waving of the trees, I revived,—the nerves grew firm—pain fled me—I asked myself in wonder for my ailments! My bodily state was, then, voluntary and self-incurred, for nothing bound or binds me to cities: I follow no calling, I am independent of men, sufficiently affluent in means, and, from my youth upward, I have taught myself the power to live alone. Why not then consult health as the greatest of earthly goods? But is health the greatest of earthly goods? Is the body to be our main care? Are we to be the minions of self? Are we to make *any* corporeal advantage the chief end—

“Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas?” *

I confess that I see not how men can arrogate to themselves the Catholic boast of Immortal Hopes—how they can utter the old truths of the nothingness of life, of the superiority of mental over physical delights, of the paramount influence of the soul and the soul's objects—and yet speak of health as our *greatest* blessing, and the workman's charge of filling up the crannies of this fast-mouldering clay as the most necessary of human objects. Assuredly health is a *great* blessing, and its care is not to be despised; but there are duties far more sacred,—obligations before which the body is as nought. For it is not necessary to live, but it *is* necessary to live nobly! And of this truth we are not without the support of high examples. Who can read the great poet “who sung of heaven,” and forget that his acts walked level with the lofty eminence of his genius, that he paid “no homage to the sun,” that even the blessing of light itself was a *luxury*, willingly to be abandoned; but the defence of the great rights of earth, the fulfilment of the solemn trust of nations, the vindication of ages yet to come, was a

* [And for the sake of life to sacrifice the very objects or purpose of living.]

necessity, and not to be avoided—and wherefore? because it was a duty! Are there not duties too to us, though upon a narrower scale, which require no less generous a devotion? Are there not objects which are more important than the ease and welfare of the body? Is our first great charge that of being a nurse to ourselves? No: every one of us who writes, toils, or actively serves the state, forms to himself, if he knoweth any thing of public virtue, interests which are not to be renounced for the purchase of a calmer pulse, and a few years added to the feeble extreme of life. Many of us have neither fortune, nor power, nor extrinsic offerings to sacrifice to mankind; but all of us—the proud, the humble, the rich, the poor—have one possession at our command;—we may sacrifice ourselves! It is from these reasons that, at the time I refer to, I put aside the hope of health;—a good earnestly indeed to be coveted, but which, if obtained only by a life remote from man, inactive, useless, self-revolving, may be too dearly bought: and gazing on the evil which I imagined (though erroneously) I could not cure, I endeavoured to reconcile myself to its necessity.

And first, it seems to me that when the nerves are somewhat weakened, the senses of sympathy are more keen—we are less negligent of our kind:—that impetuous and reckless buoyancy of spirit which mostly accompanies a hardy and iron frame is not made to enter into the infirmities of others. How can it sympathise with what it has never known? We seldom find men of great animal health and power possessed of much delicacy of mind; their humanity and kindness proceed from an overflow of spirits—their more genial virtues are often but skin-deep, and the result of good humour. The susceptible frame of women causes each more kindly and generous feeling to vibrate more powerfully on their hearts, and thus also that which in our harsher sex sharpens the nerve, often softens the affection. And this is really the cause of that increased tendency to pity, to charity, to friendship, which comes on with the decline of life, and to which Bolingbroke has so touchingly alluded. There is an excitement in the consciousness of the glorious possession of unshaken health and matured strength which hurries us on the road of that selfish enjoyment, which we are proud of our privilege to command. The passions of the soul are often winged by

our capacities, and are fed from the same sources that keep the beating of the heart strong, and the step haughty upon the earth. Thus when the frame declines, and the race of the strong can be run no more, the Mind falls gently back upon itself—it releases its garments from the grasp of the Passions which have lost their charm—intellectual objects become more precious, and, no longer sufficing to be a world to ourselves, we contract the soft habit of leaning our affection upon others; the ties round our heart are felt with a more close endearment, and every little tenderness we receive from the love of those about us teaches us the value of love. And this is therefore among the consolations of ill health, that we are more susceptible to all the kindlier emotions, and that we drink a deeper and a sweeter pleasure from the attachment of our friends. If, too, we become, as we gradually slacken in the desire of external pursuits, more devoted to intellectual objects, new sources of delight are thus bestowed upon us. Books become more eloquent of language, and their aspect grows welcome as the face of some dear consoler. Perhaps no epicure of the world's coarse allurements knows that degree of deep and serene enjoyment with which, shut up in our tranquil chambers, we surround ourselves with the WISDOM, the POETRY, the ROMANCE of past ages, and are made free, by the Sybil of the world's knowledge, to the Elysium of departed souls. The pain, or the fever, that from time to time reminds us of our clay, brings not perhaps more frequent and embarrassing interruptions, than the restlessness and eager passion which belong to the flush of health. Contented to repose—the repose becomes more prodigal of dreams.

And there is another circumstance usually attendant on ill health. We live less for the world—we do not extend the circle of friendship into the wide and distracting orbit of common acquaintance; we are thus less subject to ungenial interruptions—to vulgar humiliations—to the wear and tear of mind—the harassment and the vanity,—that torture those who seek after the “gallery of painted pictures,” and “the talk where no love is.” The gaud and the ostentation shrink into their true colours before the eye which has been taught to look within. And the pulses that have been calmed by pain, keep, without much effort, to the even tenor of philosophy. Thus ill health may save

us from many disquietudes and errors, from frequent mortification, and "*the walking after the vain shadow.*" Plato retired to his cave to be wise; sickness is often the moral cave, with its quiet, its darkness, and its solitude, to the soul.

I may add also, that he who has been taught the precariousness of life acquires a knowledge of its value. He teaches himself to regard Death with a quiet eye, and habit gifts him with a fortitude mightier than the stoicism of the Porch. As the lamb is shorn, so the wind is tempered. Nor is the calm without moments of mere animal ecstacy unknown to the rude health, which, having never waned from its vigour, is unconscious of the treasure it inherits. What rapture in the first steps to recovery—in the buoyant intervals of release! When the wise simplicity of Hesiod would express the overpowering joy of a bridegroom, in the flush of conquest hastening to the first embraces of his bride, he can compare him only to one escaped from some painful disease, or from the chains of a dungeon.* The release of pain is the excess of transport. With what gratitude we feel the first return of health—the first budding forth of the new spring that has dawned within us! Or, if our disease admit not that blessed regeneration, still it has its intervals and reprieves: moments, when the Mind springs up as the lark to heaven, singing and rejoicing as it bathes its plumage in the intoxicating air. So that our state may be of habitual tranquillity, and yet not deaf to raptures which have no parallel in the monotony of more envied lives. But I hold that the great counterbalancing gift which the infirmity of the body, if rightly moralised upon, hath the privilege to confer, is, that the mind, left free to contemplation, naturally prefers the high and the immortal to the sensual and the low. As Astronomy took its rise among the Chaldæan shepherds, whose constant leisure upon their vast and level plains enabled them to elevate their attention undivided to the

* [The passage referred to is the following, which occurs in Hesiod's fragment of the Shield of Hercules, line 42:—"Ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀνὴρ ἀσπαστὸν ὑπεκπροφύγη κακότητα νοῦσου ὕπ' ἀργαλέης ἥ καὶ κρατεροῦ ὑπὸ δεσμοῦ, ὥς βα τότ' Ἀμφιτρυῶν χάλειπν πόνον ἐκτολυπέσας ἀσπασίως τε φίλως τε ἐδν δόμον εἰσαφίκανε." Meaning as nearly as possible:—But as when a man full of delight escapes the evil resulting from a sharp disease or from the weight of ponderous chains, so then Amphitryon, having brought his hard task to an end, exultantly and rejoicingly returned to his home.]

heavenly bodies,—so the time left to us for contemplation in our hours of sickness, and our necessary disengagement from the things of earth, tend to direct our thoughts to the Stars, and guide us half unconsciously to the Science of Heaven.

Thus while, as I have said, our affections become more gentle, our souls also become more noble, and our desires more pure. We learn to think, with one of the most august of our old speculators, that “earth is an hospital, not an inn—a place to die, not live in.” Our existence becomes a great preparation for death, and the monitor within us is constant, but with a sweet and a cheering voice.

Such are the thoughts with which in the hour of sickness I taught myself to regard what with the vulgar is the greatest of human calamities! It may be some consolation to those who have suffered more bitterly than I have done, to feel that, by calling in the powers of the mind, there may be good ends and cheerful hopes wrought out from the wasting of the body; and that it is only the darkness—unconsidered and unexplored—which shapes the spectre, and appals us with the fear.

THE LAW OF ARREST.

A TALE FROM FACTS.



THE immediate interest which the proceedings of the Legislature have attached to the existent Law of Arrest, and its probable reform, induce me to relate the following story.

Once upon a time there lived at Hamburgh a certain merchant of the name of Meyer: he was a good little man; charitable to the poor, hospitable to his friends, and so rich that he was extremely respected, in spite of his good nature. Among that part of his property which was vested in other people's hands, and called "debts," was the sum of five hundred pounds owed to him by the captain of an English vessel. This debt had been so long contracted that the worthy Meyer began to wish for a new investment of his capital. He accordingly resolved to take a trip to Portsmouth, in which town Captain Jones was then residing, and take that liberty which in my opinion should in a free country never be permitted,—viz., the liberty of applying for his money.

Our worthy merchant one bright morning found himself at Portsmouth; he was a stranger to that town, but not altogether unacquainted with the English language. He lost no time in calling on Captain Jones.

"And vat," said he to a man whom he asked to conduct him to the captain's house, "vat is dat fine veshell yondare?"

"She be the Royal Sally," replied the man, "bound for Calcutta — sails to-morrow; but here's Captain Jones's house, sir, and he'll tell you all about it."

The merchant bowed, and knocked at the door of a red-brick house — door green — brass knocker. Captain Gregory Jones was a tall man; he wore a blue jacket without skirts; he had high cheek-bones, small eyes, and

his whole appearance was expressive of what is generally termed the bluff honesty of the seaman.

Captain Gregory Jones seemed somewhat disconcerted at seeing his friend—he begged for a little further time. The merchant looked grave—three years had already elapsed. The captain demurred—the merchant pressed; the captain blustered—and the merchant, growing angry, began to threaten. All of a sudden Captain Jones's manner changed, he seemed to recollect himself, begged pardon, said he could easily procure the money, desired the merchant to go back to his inn, and promised to call on him in the course of the day. Mynheer Meyer went home, and ordered an excellent dinner. Time passed—his friend came not. Meyer grew impatient. He had just put on his hat and was walking out, when the waiter threw open the door, and announced two gentlemen.

"Ah, dere comes de monish," thought Mynheer Meyer. The gentlemen approached—the taller one whipped out what seemed to Meyer a receipt. "Ah, ver vell, I vill sign, ver vell!"

"Signing, sir, is useless; you will be kind enough to accompany us. This is a warrant for debt, sir; my house is extremely comfortable—gentlemen of the first fashion go there—quite moderate, too, only a guinea a-day—find your own wine."

"I do—no—understand, sare," said the merchant, smiling amiably; "I am ver vell off here—thank you——"

"Come, come," said the other gentleman, speaking for the first time, "no parlavoo, monseer, your are our prisoner. This is a warrant for the sum of 10,000*l.* due to Captain Gregory Jones."

The merchant stared—the merchant frowned—but so it was. Captain Gregory Jones, who owed Mynheer Meyer 500*l.*, had arrested Mynheer Meyer for 10,000*l.*; for, as every one knows, any man may arrest us who has conscience enough to swear that we owe him money. Where was Mynheer Meyer in a strange town to get bail? Mynheer Meyer went to prison.

"Dis be a strange vay of paying a man his monish!" said Mynheer Meyer.

In order to while away time, our merchant, who was wonderfully social, scraped acquaintance with some of his fellow-prisoners. "Vat be you in prishon for?" said he to

a stout, respectable-looking man, who seemed in a violent passion—"for vat crime?"

"I, sir!—crime!" quoth the prisoner. "Sir, I was going to Liverpool to vote at the election, when a friend of the opposite candidate's had me suddenly arrested for 2000*l*. Before I get bail the election will be over!"

"Vat's that you tell me? arrest you to prevent you giving an honesht vote? is that justice?"

"Justice, no!" cried our friend; it's the Law of Arrest."

"And vat be you in prishon for?" said the merchant, pityingly, to a thin, cadaverous-looking object, who ever and anon applied a handkerchief to eyes that were worn with weeping.

"An attorney offered a friend of mine to discount a bill, if he could obtain a few names to indorse it—I, sir, indorsed it. The bill became due, the next day the attorney arrested all whose names were on the bill; there were eight of us, the law allows him to charge two guineas for each; there are sixteen guineas, sir, for the lawyer—but I, sir—alas! my family will starve before I shall be released. Sir, there are a set of men called discounting attorneys, who live upon the profits of entrapping and arresting us poor folk."

"Mine Gott! but is dat justice?"

"Alas! No, sir, it is the Law of Arrest."

"But," said the merchant, turning round to a lawyer, whom the devil had deserted, and who was now with the victims of his profession, "dey tell me, dat in Englant a man be called innoshent till he be proved guilty; but here am I, who, because von carrion of a shailor, who owesh me five hundred pounts, takes an oath that I owe him ten thousand—here, am I, on that schoundrel's single oath, clapped up in a prishon. Is this a man's being innoshent till he is proved guilty, sare?"

"Sir," said the lawyer, primly, "you are thinking of criminal cases; but if a man be unfortunate enough to get into debt, that is quite a different thing:—we are harder to poverty than we are to crime!"

"But, mine Gott! is dat justice?"

"Justice! pooh! it's the Law of Arrest," said the lawyer, turning on his heel.

Our merchant was liberated; no one appeared to prove

the debt. He flew to a magistrate; he told his case; he implored justice against Captain Jones.

"Captain Jones!" said the magistrate, taking snuff;
"Captain Gregory Jones, you mean?"

"Ay, mine goot sare—yesh!"

"He set sail for Calcutta yesterday. He commands the Royal Sally. He must evidently have sworn this debt against you for the purpose of getting rid of your claim, and silencing your mouth till you could catch him no longer. He's a clever fellow is Gregory Jones!"

"De teufel! but, sare, ish dere no remedy for de poor merchant?"

"Remedy! oh, yes—indictment for perjury."

"But vat use is dat? You say he be gone—ten thousand miles off—to Calcutta!"

"That's certainly against your indictment!"

"And cannot I get my monish?"

"Not as I see."

"And I have been arreshted instead of him?"

"You have."

"Sare, I have only von vord to say—is dat justice?"

"That I can't say, Mynheer Meyer, but it is certainly the Law of Arrest," answered the magistrate; and he bowed the merchant out of the room.*

* Since this tale was written, the law has happily been altered.

ON SATIETY.



MORALISTS are wrong when they preach indiscriminately against Satiety and denounce the sated. There is a species of satiety which is productive of wisdom. When Pleasure palls, Philosophy begins. I doubt whether men ever thoroughly attain to knowledge of the world, until they have gone through its attractions and allurements. Experience is not acquired by the spectator of life, but by its actor. It was not by contemplating the fortunes of others, but by the remembrance of his own, that the wisest of Mortals felt that "All was vanity." A true and practical philosophy, not of books alone, but of mankind, is acquired by the passions as well as by the reason. The Temple of the Science is approached by the garden as well as by the desert; and a healing spirit is distilled from the rose-leaves which withered in our hand.

A certain sentiment of satiety, of the vanity of human pleasures, of the *labor ineptiarum*, of the nothingness of trite and vulgar occupations, is often the best preparation to that sober yet elevated view of the ends of life, which is Philosophy. As many have blessed the bed of sickness on which they had leisure to contemplate their past existence, and to form an improved chart of the future voyage—so there is a sickness of the soul, when exhaustion itself is salutary, and out of the languor and the tedium we extract the seeds of the moral regeneration. Much of what is most indulgent in Morals—much of what is most tender and profound in Poetry, have come from a sated spirit. The disappointments of an enthusiastic and fervent heart have great teaching in their pathos. As the first converts to the Gospel were amongst the unfortunate and the erring—so the men who have known most the fallacies of our human nature are, perhaps, those the most inclined to foster the aspirations of the spiritual. To the one Faust who found a comrade in the Fiend, there are a thousand who are visited by the Angel.

The more civilised, the more refined, becomes the period in which we are cast, the more are we subject to satiety—

“That weariness of all
We meet, or feel, or hear, or see.”

The even road of existence, the routine of nothings, the smooth and silken indolence, which are destined to those amongst us who, wealthy and well-born, have no occupation in life but the effort to live at ease, produce on the subject the same royalty of discontent that was once the attribute of a king. In a free and a prosperous country, all who are rich and idle are as kings. We have the same splendid monotony and unvarying spectacle of repeated pageants of which the victims of a court complain. All society has become a court, and we pass our lives, like Madame de Maintenon, in seeking to amuse those who cannot be amused; or, like Louis XIV., in seeking to be amused by those who cannot amuse us. Satiety is, therefore, the common and catholic curse of the idle portion of a highly civilised country. And the inequalities of life are fittingly adjusted. For those who are excluded from pleasure in the one extreme, there are those who are incapable of pleasure in the other. The fogs gather dull and cheerless over the base of the mountain, but the air at the summit exhausts and withers.

Yet the poor have their satiety no less than the wealthy—the satiety of toil and the conviction of its hopelessness. “Picture to yourself,” wrote a mechanic once to me, “a man, sensible that he is made for something better than to labour and to die, cursed with a desire of knowledge, while occupied only with the task to live, drudging on from year to year, to render himself above the necessity of drudgery, to feel his soul out of the clutches of want, and enabled to indulge at ease in the luxury of becoming better and wiser;—picture to yourself such a man, with such an ambition, finding every effort in vain, seeing that the utmost he can do is to provide for the day, and so from day to day to live battling against the morrow. With what heart can he give himself up at night to unproductive tasks? Scarce is he lost for a moment, amidst the wonders of knowledge for the first time presented to him, ere the voice of his children disturbs and brings him back to the world—the debt unpaid—the bill dishonoured—the demands upon the

Saturday's wages. Oh, sir, in such moments, none can feel how great is our disgust at life, how jaded and how weary we feel;—we recoil alike from amusement and knowledge—we sicken at the doom to which we are compelled—we are as weary of the sun as the idlest rich man in the land—we share his prerogative of satiety, and long for the rest in the green bed where our forefathers sleep, released for ever from the tooth of unrelenting cares."

The writer of this was a poet—let me hope that there are not many of his order condemned with him to a spirit out of harmony with its lot. Yet as knowledge widens its circle, the number will increase; and if our social system is to remain always the same, I doubt whether the desire of knowledge, which is the desire of leisure, will be a blessing to those who are everlastingly condemned to toil.

But the satiety of the rich has its cure in what is the very curse of the poor. Their satiety is from indolence, and its cure is action. Satiety with them is chiefly the offspring of a restless imagination and a stagnant intellect. Their minds are employed on trifles, in which their feelings cease to take an interest. It is not the frivolous who feel satiety, it is a better order of spirits fated to have no other occupation than frivolities. The French memoir-writers, who evince so much talent wasted away in a life of trifles, present the most melancholy pictures we possess of satiety and of the more gloomy wisdom of apathy in which it sometimes ends. The flowers of the heart run to seed. Madame D'Epinay has expressed this briefly and beautifully:—"Le cœur se blase, les ressorts se brisent, et l'on finit, je crois, par n'être plus sensible à rien."

Oh, that fearful prostration of the mind, that torpor of the affections, that utter hopeless indifference to all things—

"Full little can he tell who hath not tried
What hell it is!"

To rise and see through the long day no object that can interest, no pleasure that can amuse, with a heart perpetually craving excitement to pass mechanically through the round of unexcitable occupations—to make an enemy of Time—to count the moments of his march—to be his captive in the prison-house—to foresee no delivery but death—to be a machine and not a man, having no self-will

and no emotion—wound up from day to day—things in a dream, in which we act involuntarily—feeling the best part of us locked up and lifeless, and that which is active, a puppet to a power that fools us with its objectless fancies—passive, but not at rest;—the deep and crushing melancholy of such a state, let no happier being venture to despise.

It is usually after some sudden pause in the passions that we are thus afflicted. The winds drop, and the leaf they whirled aloft rots upon the ground. It is the dread close of disappointed love, or of baffled ambition. Who ever painted love when it discovers the worthlessness of its object, and retreats gloomily into itself, that has not painted, even to the hackneying of the picture, the weariness that succeeds—the stale and unprofitable uses to which all the world seems abruptly and barrenly resolved? So with ambition—the retirement of a statesman before his time is perhaps the least enviable repose that his enemies could inflict on him. “Damien’s bed of steel” is a luxury to the bed of withered laurels; the gloomy exile of Swift, fretting his heart out, “a rat in a cage;” the spectre of Olivares—the petulance of Napoleon wrestling with his gaoler upon a fashion in tea-cups;—what mournful parodies of the dignity of human honours! Between the past glory and the posthumous renown, how awful an interlude! The unwilling rest to a long-continued excitement is a solitude from which the fiends might recoil!

But happy those on whom the curse of satiety falls early, and before the heart has exhausted its resources; when we can yet contend against the lethargy, ere it becomes a habit, and allow satiety to extend only to the trifles of life, and not to its great objects; when we are wearied only of the lighter pleasures, and can turn to the more grave pursuits; and the discontent of the Imagination is a spur to the Intellect. Satiety is the heritage of the Heart, not of the Reason: and the Reason properly invoked possesses in itself the genii to dissolve the charm and awake the sleeper. For he alone, who thoroughly convinces himself that he has duties to perform—that his centre of being is in the world and not in himself—can conquer the egotisms of weariness. The objects confined to self becoming worn-out and wearisome, he may find new and inexhaustible objects in the relations that he holds to others. Duty has

pleasures which know no satiety. The weariness then known and thus removed begets the philosophy I referred to in the commencement of these remarks. For wisdom is the true phoenix, and never rises but from the ashes of a former existence of the mind. Then perhaps, too, as we learn a proper estimate of the pleasures of this life, we learn also from those yearnings of our more subtile and tender soul, never satisfied below, a fresh evidence of our ultimate destinies. A consolation which Preacher and Poet have often deduced from the weariness of our disappointments—contending that our perpetual desire for something unattainable here, betokens and prophesies a possession in the objects of a hereafter—so that life itself is but one expectation of eternity. As birds, born in a cage from which they had never known release, would still flutter against the bars, and, in the instinct of their unconquered nature, long for the untried and pathless air which they behold through their narrow grating;—so, pent in our cage of clay, the diviner instinct is not dead within us; at times we sicken with indistinct and undefinable apprehensions of a more noble birthright—and the soul feels stirringly that its wings, which it doth but bruise in its dungeon-tenement, were designed by the Creator, who shapeth all things to their uses, for the enjoyment of the royalties of heaven.

CHAIROLAS.

CHAPTER I.

ONCE upon a time there existed a kingdom called Paidá, stretching to the west of that wide tract of land known to certain ancient travellers by the name of Callipaga. The heirs apparent to the throne of this kingdom were submitted to a very singular ordeal. At the extremity of the empire was a chain of mountains, which separated Paidá from an immense region, the chart of which no geographer had ever drawn. Various and contradictory were all the accounts of this region, from the eldest to the latest time. According to some it was the haunt of robbers and demons; every valley was beset with danger; the fruits of every tree were poisonous: and evil spirits lurked in every path, sometimes to fascinate, and sometimes to terrify, the inexperienced traveller to his destruction. Others, on the contrary, asserted that no land on earth equalled the beauty and the treasures of this mystic region. The purest air circulated over the divinest landscapes; the inhabitants were beneficent genii; and the life they led was that of happiness without alloy, and excitement without satiety. At the age of twenty the heir to the throne was ordained, by immemorial custom, to penetrate alone into this debated and enigmatical realm. It was supposed to require three years to traverse the whole of it, nor was it until this grand tour for the royalty of Paidá was completed, that the adventurer was permitted to return home and aspire to the heritage of the crown. It happened, however, that a considerable proportion of these travellers never again re-entered their native land—detained, according to some, by the beautiful fairies of the unknown region; or, according to others, sacrificed by its fiends. One might imagine that those princes who were fortunate enough to return, too respectable travellers to be addicted to gratuitous invention, would have been enabled by their testimony to reconcile the various reports of the country into which they penetrated. But after their

return the austere habits of royalty compelled them to discretion and reserve; and the hints which had escaped them from time to time, when conversing with their more confidential courtiers, so far from elucidating, confirmed the mystery; for each of the princes had evidently met with a different fortune: with one the reminiscences bequeathed by his journey seemed brilliant and delightful; while, perhaps, with his successor, the unknown region was never alluded to without a shudder or a sigh. Thus the only persons who could have reconciled conflicting rumours were exactly those who the most kept alive the debate; and the empire was still divided into two parties, who, according to the bias of their several dispositions, represented the neighbouring territory as an Elysium or a Tartarus.

The present monarch had of course undergone the customary ordeal. Naturally bold and cheerful, he had commenced his eventful journey with eagerness and hope, and had returned to Paidá an altered and melancholy man. He swayed his people with great ability and success, he entered into all the occupations of his rank, and did not reject its pleasures and its pomps; but it was evident that his heart was not with his pursuits. He was a prey to some secret regret; but, whether he sighed to regain the land he had left, or was saddened by the adventures he had known, was a matter of doubt and curiosity even to his queen. Several years of his wedded life were passed without promise of an heir, and the eyes of the people were already turned to the eldest nephew of the sovereign, when it was formally announced to the court that the queen had been graciously pleased to become in the family-way.

In due process of time a son made his appearance. He was declared a prodigy of beauty, and there was something remarkably regal in the impatience of his cries. Nothing could exceed the joy of the court, unless it was the grief of the king's eldest nephew. The king himself, indeed, was perhaps also an exception to the general rapture; he looked wistfully on the crimson cheeks of his first-born, and muttered to himself, "These boys are a great subject of anxiety."

"And of pride," said a small sweet voice that came from the cradle.

The king was startled—for even in Paidá a king's son does not speak as soon as he is born: he looked again at the little prince's face—it was not from him that the voice came, his royal highness had just fallen asleep.

"Dost thou not behold me, O king?" said the voice again.

And now the monarch beheld upon the pillow a small creature scarcely taller than a needle, but whose shape was modelled in the most beautiful proportions of manhood.

"Know," continued the apparition, while the king remained silent with consternation, "that I am the good genius of the new-born; each mortal hath at its birth his guardian spirit, though the genius be rarely visible. I bring to thy son the three richest gifts that can be bestowed upon man; but, alas! they are difficult to preserve—teach him to guard them as his most precious treasure."

The genius vanished. The king recovered from his amaze, and, expecting to find some jewels of enormous value, hastily removed the coverlid, and saw by the side of his child an eagle's feather, a pigeon's feather, and a little tuft of the down of a swan.

CHAPTER II.

THE prince grew up strong, handsome, and graceful; he evinced the most amiable disposition; he had much of that tender and romantic enthusiasm which we call Sentiment, and which serves to render the virtues so lovely; he had an intuitive admiration for all that is daring and noble; and his ambition would, perhaps, have led him into dangerous excesses were it not curbed, or purified, by a singular disinterestedness and benevolence of disposition, which rendered him fearful to injure those with whom he came into contact, and anxious to serve them. The union of such qualities was calculated to conduct him to glory, but to render him scrupulous as to its means; his desire to elevate himself was strong, but it was blended with a stronger wish to promote the welfare of others. Princes of this nature were not common at Paidá, and the people looked with the most sanguine hopes to the prospect of his reign. He had, however, some little

drawbacks to the effect of his good qualities. His susceptibilities made him too easy with his friends, and somewhat too bashful with strangers; with the one he found it difficult to refuse any thing, with the other he was too keenly alive to ridicule and the fear of shame. But the first was a failing very easily forgiven at a court, and the second was one that a court would, in all probability, correct. The king took considerable pains with the prince's education, his talents were great, and he easily mastered whatever he undertook; but at each proof of the sweetness of his disposition, or the keenness of his abilities, the good king seemed to feel rather alarm than gratification. "Alas!" he would mutter to himself, "that fatal region—that perilous ordeal!" and then turn hastily away.

These words fed the prince's curiosity without much exciting his fear. The journey presented nothing terrible to his mind, for the courtiers, according to their wont, deemed it disloyal to detail to him any but the most flattering accounts of the land he was to visit; and he attributed the broken expressions of his father partly to the melancholy of his constitution, and partly to the over-acuteness of paternal anxiety. For the rest, it was a pleasant thing to get rid of his tutors and the formalities of a court; and with him, as with all the young, hope was an element in which fear could not breathe. He longed for his twentieth year, and forgot to enjoy the pleasures of boyhood in his anticipation of the excitements of youth.

CHAPTER III.

THE fatal time arrived; the Prince Chairolas had taken leave of his weeping mother—embraced his friends—and was receiving the last injunctions of his father, while his horses impatiently snorted at the gates of the palace.

"My son," said the king, with more than his usual gravity, "from the journey you are about to make you are nearly sure of returning a wiser man, but you may not return a better one. The three charms which you have always worn about your person you must be careful to preserve." Here the king recited, for the first time, to the wondering prince the adventure at his birth. Chairolas had always felt a lively curiosity to know why, from his

infancy, he had been compelled to wear about his royal person three things, so apparently worthless, as an eagle's feather, a pigeon's feather, and the tuft of a swan's down, and still more why such seeming trifles had been gorgeously set in jewels. The secret now made known to him elevated his self-esteem; he was evidently, then, a favourite with the superior powers, and marked from his birth for no ordinary destinies.

"Alas!" concluded the king, "had I received such talismans, perhaps——" he broke off abruptly, once more embraced his son, and hastened to shroud his meditations in the interior of his palace.

Meanwhile the prince set out upon his journey: the sound of the wind-instruments upon which his guards played cheerily, the caracoles of his favourite charger, the excitement of the fresh air, the sense of liberty, and the hope of adventure—all conspired to elevate his spirits. He forgot father, mother, and home. Never was journey undertaken under gayer presentiments, or by a more joyous mind.

CHAPTER IV.

At length the prince arrived at the spot where his attendants were to quit him. It was the entrance of a narrow defile through precipitous and lofty mountains. Wild trees of luxuriant foliage grew thickly along the path. It seemed a primæval vale, desolate even in its beauty, as though man had never trodden it before. The prince paused for a moment, his friends and followers gathered round him with their adieus, and tears, and wishes, but still Hope inspired and animated him; he waved his hand gaily, spurred his steed, and the trees soon concealed his form from the gaze of his retinue.

He proceeded for some time with slowness and difficulty, so entangled was the soil by its matted herbage, so obstructed was the path by the interlaced and sweeping boughs. At length, towards evening, the ground became more open; and, descending a gentle hill, a green and lovely plain spread itself before him. It was intersected by rivulets, and variegated with every species of plant and tree; it was a garden in which Nature seemed to have shewn how well she can dispense with Art. The prince would have been very much enchanted if he had

not begun to be very hungry; and, for the first time, he recollected that it was possible to be starved. He looked anxiously, but vainly, round for some sign of habitation, and then he regarded the trees to see if they bore fruit; but, alas! it was the spring of the year, and he could only console himself with observing that the abundance of the blossoms promised plenty of fruit for the autumn,—a long time for a prince to wait for his dinner!

He still, however, continued to proceed, when suddenly he came upon a beaten track, evidently made by art. His horse neighed as its hoofs rang upon the hardened soil, and breaking of itself into a quicker pace, soon came to a wide arcade overhung with roses. "This must conduct to some mansion," thought Chairolas.

But night came on, and still the prince was in the arcade; the stars, peeping through, here and there, served to guide his course, until at length lights, more earthly and more brilliant, broke upon him. The arcade ceased, and Chairolas found himself at the gates of a mighty city, over whose terraces, rising one above the other, the moon shone bright and still.

"Who is there?" asked a voice at the gate.

"Chairolas, prince of Paidá!" answered the traveller.

The gates opened instantly. "Princes are ever welcome at the city of Chrysaor," said the same voice.

And as Chairolas entered, he saw himself instantly surrounded by a group of both sexes richly attired, and bending to the earth with eastern adoration, while, as with a single voice, they shouted out, "Welcome to the Prince of Paidá!"

A few minutes more, and Chairolas was in the magnificent chamber of a magnificent house; the rarest viands, the richest wines, covered the board before him: and the attendants, with the most delicate sensibility, left him to himself.

"All this is delightful," thought the prince, as he finished his supper; "but I see nothing of either fairies or fiends."

His soliloquy was interrupted by the master of the mansion, who came to conduct the prince to his couch. Scarce was his head upon his pillow ere he fell asleep,—a sure sign that he was a stranger at Chrysaor, where the prevalent disease was the want of rest.

The next day, almost ere Chairolas was dressed, his lodging was besieged by all the courtiers of the city. He found that though his dialect was a little different from theirs, the language itself was much the same; for, perhaps, there is no court in the universe where a prince is not tolerably understood. The servile adulation which Chairolas had experienced in Paidá was not nearly so delightful as the polished admiration he received from the courtiers of Chrysaor. While they preserved that tone of equality without which all society is but the interchange of ceremonies, they evinced, by a thousand nameless attentions, their respect for his good qualities, which they seemed to penetrate as by an instinct. The gaiety, the life, the grace of those he saw, perfectly intoxicated the prince. He was immediately involved in a round of engagements. It was impossible that he should ever be alone.

CHAPTER V.

As the confusion of first impressions wore off, Chairolas remarked a singular peculiarity in the manners of his new friends. They were the greatest laughers he had ever met. Not that they laughed loud, or made much noise, but that they laughed constantly. This habit was not attended with any real merriment or happiness. Many of the saddest persons laughed the most. It was also remarkable that the principal objects of these cachinatory ebullitions were precisely such as Chairolas had been taught to consider the most serious, and the farthest removed from ludicrous associations. They never laughed at any thing witty or humorous, at a comedy or a joke. But if one of their friends became poor, then how they laughed at his poverty! If a child broke the heart of a father, or a wife ran away from her husband, or a great lord cheated at play, or ruined his tradesmen, then they had no command over their muscles. In a word, misfortune or vice made a principal object of this epidemical affection. But, besides this, they laughed at any thing that differed from their general habits. If a lady blushed—if a sage talked wisdom—if a man did anything uncommon, no matter what, they were instantly seized with this jovial convulsion. They laughed at generosity—they laughed at sentiment—they laughed at

patriotism—and, though affecting to be exceedingly pious, they laughed with particular pleasure at any extraordinary show of religion.

Chairolas was extremely puzzled; for he saw that if they laughed at what was bad, they laughed also at what was good: it seemed as if they had no other mode of condemning or applauding. But what perplexed him yet more was a strange transformation to which this people were subject. Their faces were apt to turn, even in a single night, into enormous rhododendrons; and it was very common to see a human figure walking about as gaily as possible with a flower upon its shoulders instead of a face.

Resolved to enlighten himself as to this peculiarity of custom, Chairolas one day took aside a courtier who appeared to him the most intelligent of his friends. Grin-aldibus Hassan Sneeraskin (so was the courtier termed) laughed longer than ever when he heard the perplexity of the prince.

“Know,” said he, as soon as he had composed himself, “that there are two penal codes in this city. For one set of persons, whom you and I never see except in the streets,—persons who cut the wood and draw the water—persons who work for the other class,—we have punishments, such as hanging, and flogging, and shutting up in prisons, and Heaven knows what;—punishments, in short, that are contained in the ninety-nine volumes of the Hatchet and Rope Pandects. But, for the other class, with whom you mix every day,—the very best society, in short,—we have another code, which punishes only by laughter. And you have no notion how severe the punishment is considered. It is thus that we keep our social system in order, and laugh folly and error out of countenance.”

“An admirable—a most gentle code!” cried the prince. “But,” he added, after a moment’s reflection, “I see you sometimes laughing at what seems to me most praiseworthy, as well as most vicious.”

“Not at all; your highness is mistaken: we never laugh at people who do exactly like the rest of us. We only laugh at whatever is odd; and with us oddity is a crime.”

“Oddity even in virtue?”

“Precisely so.”

“But those persons with rhododendrons instead of faces?”

"Are the worst of our criminals. If we continue to laugh at persons above a certain time, their faces undergo the transformation you have witnessed, no matter how handsome they were before."

"This is indeed laughing people out of countenance," said Chairolas, amazed. "What an affliction!"

"Indeed it is. Take care," added Grinaldibus Hassan Sneeraskin, with paternal unction,—"take care that you never do any thing to deserve a laugh—the torture is inexpressible—the transformation is awful!"

CHAPTER VI.

THIS conversation threw Chairolas into a profound reverie. The charm of the society was invaded; it now admitted restraint and fear. If ever he should be laughed at? if ever he should become a rhododendron?—terrible thought! He remembered various instances he had hitherto but little observed, in which he more than suspected that he had already been unconsciously afflicted with symptoms of this greatest of all calamities. His reason allowed the justice of his apprehension; for he could not flatter himself that in all respects he was exactly like the courtiers of Chrysaor.

That night he went to a splendid entertainment given by the prime minister. Conscious of great personal attractions, and magnificently attired, he felt, at his first entrance into the gorgeous halls, the flush of youthful and elated vanity. It was his custom to wear upon his breast one of his most splendid ornaments. It was the tuft of the fairy swan's down set in brilliants of great price. Something there was in this ornament which shed a kind of charm over his whole person. It gave a more interesting dignity to his mien, a loftier aspect to his brow, a deeper and a softer expression to his eyes. So potent is the present of a fairy, as all our science upon such subjects assures us.

Still, as Chairolas passed through the rooms, he perceived, with a thrill of terror, that a smile ill suppressed met him at every side; and when he turned his head to look back, he perceived that the fatal smile had broadened into a laugh. All his complacency vanished; terror and shame possessed him. Yes, he was certainly laughed at!

He felt his face itching already—certainly the leaves were sprouting!

He hastened to escape from the crowded rooms—passed into the lighted and voluptuous gardens—and seated himself in a retired and sequestered alcove. Here he was surprised by the beautiful Mikra, a lady to whom he had been paying assiduous court, and who appeared to take a lively interest in his affairs.

"Prince Chairolas here!" cried the lady, seating herself by his side; "alone too, and sad! How is this?"

"Alas!" answered the prince, despondingly, "I feel that I am regarded as a criminal: how can I hope for your love! In a word—dreadful confession!—I am certainly laughed at. I shall assuredly blossom in a week or two. Light of my eyes! deign to compassionate my affliction, and inform my ignorance. Acquaint me with the crime I have committed."

"Prince," said the gentle Mikra, much moved by her lover's dejection, "do not speak thus. Perhaps I ought to have spared you this pain. But then delicacy restrained me——"

"Speak—speak in mercy!"

"Well then—but pardon me—that swan's down tuft, it is charming, beautiful, it becomes you exceedingly! But at Chrysaor nobody wears swan's down tufts,—you understand."

"And it is for this, then, that I may be rhododendronized!" exclaimed Chairolas.

"Indeed, I fear so."

"Away treacherous gift!" exclaimed the prince; and he tore off the fairy ornament. He dashed it to the ground, and left the alcove. The fair Mikra stayed behind to pick up the diamonds: the swan's down itself had vanished, or, at least, it was invisible to the fine lady of Chrysaor.

CHAPTER VII.

WITH the loss of his swan's down Prince Chairolas recovered his self-complacency. No one laughed at him in future. He was relieved from the fear of efflorescence. For a while he was happy. But months glided away, and the prince grew tired of his sojourn at Chrysaor. The sight of the same eternal faces and the same eternal

rhododendrons, the sound of the same eternal laughter, wearied him to death. He resolved to pursue his travels. Accordingly, he quarrelled with Mikra, took leave of his friends, and, mounting his favourite steed, departed from the walls of Chrysaor. He took the precaution, this time, of hiring some attendants at Chrysaor, who carried with them provisions. A single one of the many jewels he bore about him would have more than sufficed to purchase the service of half Chrysaor.

Although he had derived so little advantage from one of the fairy gifts, he naturally thought he might be more fortunate with the rest. The pigeon's feather was appropriate enough to travelling (for we may suppose that it was a carrier-pigeon); accordingly he placed it, set in emeralds, amidst the plumage of his cap. He spent some few days in rambling about, until he found he had entered a country unknown even to his guides. The landscape was more flat and less luxuriant than that which had hitherto cheered his way, the sun was less brilliant, and the sky seemed nearer to the earth.

While gazing around him, he became suddenly aware of the presence of a stranger, who, stationed right before his horse, stretched forth his hand and thus accosted him:—

“O thrice-noble and generous traveller! save me from starvation. Heaven smiles upon one to whom it has given the inestimable treasure of a pigeon's feather. May Heaven continue to lavish its blessings upon you,—meanwhile spare me a trifle!”

The charitable Chairolas ordered his purse-bearer to relieve the wants of the stranger, and then inquired the name of the country they had entered. He was informed that it was termed Apatia; and that its inhabitants were singularly cordial to travellers, “Especially,” added the mendicant, “if they possess that rarest of earthly gifts—the feather of a pigeon.”

“Well,” thought Chairolas, “my good genius evidently intends to make up for his mistake about the swan's down: doubtless the pigeon's feather will be exceedingly serviceable!”

He desired the mendicant to guide him to the nearest city of Apatia, which, fortunately, happened to be the metropolis.

On entering the streets, Chairolas was struck with the

exceeding bustle and animation of the inhabitants; far from the indolent luxury of Chrysaor, every thing breathed of activity, enterprise, and toil.

The place resembled a fortified town; the houses were built of ponderous stone, a drawbridge to each; the windows were barred with iron; a sentinel guarded every portico.

"Is there a foreign invasion without the walls?" asked the prince.

"No," answered the mendicant; "but here every man guards against his neighbour, take care of yourself, noble sir;" so saying, the grateful Apatian picked the prince's pockets, and disappeared amidst the crowd.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE prince found himself no less courted at the capital of Apatia than he had been in Chrysaor. But society was much less charming. He amused himself by going out in the streets incognito, and watching the manners of the inhabitants. He found them addicted to the most singular pursuits. One game consisted in setting up a straw and shooting arrows at it blindfold. If you missed the mark, you paid dearly; if you hit it, you made a fortune. Many persons ruined themselves at this game.

Another amusement consisted in giving certain persons, trained for the purpose, and dressed in long gowns, a quantity of gold, in return for which they threw dirt at you. The game was played thus:—You found one of these gownsmen—gave him the required quantity of gold—and then stood to be pelted at in a large tennis-court; your adversary did the same:—if the gownsmen employed against you dirtied you more than your gownsmen dirtied your antagonist, you were stripped naked and turned adrift in the streets; but if your antagonist was the most bespattered, you won your game, and received back half the gold you had given to your gownsmen. This was a most popular diversion. They had various other amusements, all of the same kind, in which the chief entertainment was the certainty of loss.

For the rest, the common occupation was quarrelling with each other, buying and selling, picking pockets, and making long speeches about liberty and glory!

Chairolas found that the pigeon's feather was every-

where a passport to favour. But in a short time this produced its annoyances. His room was besieged by applications for charity. In vain he resisted. No man with a pigeon's feather, he was assured, ever refused assistance to the poor. All the ladies in the city were in love with him; all the courtiers were his friends; they adored and they plundered him; and the reason of the adoration and the plunder was the pigeon's feather.

One day he found his favourite friend with his favourite fair one—a fair one so favoured, that he had actually proposed and had actually been accepted. Their familiarity and their treachery were evident. Chairolas drew his sabre, and would certainly have slain them both, if the lady's screams had not brought the king's guards into the room. They took all three before the judge. He heard the case gravely, and sentenced Chairolas to forego the lady and pay the costs of the sentence.

"Base foreigner that you are!" he said, gravely, "and unmindful of your honour. Have you not trusted your friend and believed in her you loved? Have you not suffered them to be often together? If you had been an honourable man, you would know that you must always watch a woman and suspect a friend.—Go!"

As Chairolas was retiring, half-choked with rage and shame, the lady seized him by the arm. "Ah!" she whispered, "I should never have deceived you but for the pigeon's feather."

Chairolas threw himself on his bed, and, exhausted by grief, fell fast asleep. When he woke the next morning, he found that his attendants had disappeared with the bulk of his jewels: they left behind them a scroll containing these words—"A man with so fine a pigeon's feather will never hang us for stealing."

Chairolas flung the feather out of the window. The wind blew it away in an instant. An hour afterwards he had mounted his steed and was already beyond the walls of the capital of Apatia.

CHAPTER IX.

At nightfall the prince found himself at the gates of a lofty castle. Wearied and worn out, he blew the horn suspended at the portals, and demanded food and shelter for

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the night. No voice answered, but the gates opened of their own accord. Chairolas left his courser to feed at will on the herbage, and entered the castle: he passed through several magnificent chambers without meeting a soul till he came to a small pavilion. The walls were curiously covered with violets and rose-leaves wrought in mosaic; the lights streamed from jewels of a ruby glow, set in lotos-leaves. The whole spot breathed of enchantment; in fact, Chairolas had at length reached an enchanted castle.

Upon a couch in an alcove reclined a female form, covered with a veil studded with silver stars, but of a texture sufficiently transparent to permit Chairolas to perceive how singularly beautiful were the proportions beneath. The prince approached with a soft step.

"Pardon me," he said, with an hesitating voice, "I fear that I disturb your repose." The figure made no reply; and, after a pause, Chairolas, unable to resist the desire to see the face of the sleeper, lifted the veil.

Never had so beautiful a countenance broke even upon his dreams. The first bloom of youth shed its softest hues over the cheek; the lips just parted in a smile which sufficed to call forth a thousand dimples. Nothing was wanting to complete the most perfect ideal of virgin beauty, save the eyes; but these were closed in a slumber so profound, that but for the colours of the cheek and the regular and ambrosial breathing of the lips, you might have imagined that the slumber was of death. Beside her, on the couch, lay a casket, on which the eyes of the prince, resting, caught these words engraved—"He alone who can unlock this casket will waken the sleeper; and he who finds the heart may claim the hand."

Chairolas, transported with joy and hope, seized the casket—the key was in the lock. With trembling hands he sought to turn it in the hasp—it remained immovable—it resisted his most strenuous efforts. Nothing could be more slight than the casket—more minute than the key; but all the strength of Chairolas was insufficient to open the lock.

Chairolas was in despair. He remained for days—for weeks in the enchanted chamber. He neither ate nor slept during all that time. But such was the magic of the place that he never once felt hunger or fatigue. Gazing upon that divine form, he for the first time felt all the rapture

and intoxication of real love. He spent his days and nights in seeking to unclosethe the casket; sometimes in his rage he dashed it to the ground—he trampled upon it—he sought to break what he could not open—in vain.

One day while thus employed, he heard the horn wind without the castle gates; then steps echoed along the halls, and presently a stranger entered the enchanted pavilion. The new-comer was neither old nor young, neither handsome nor ugly. He approached the alcove despite the menacing looks of the jealous prince. He gazed upon the sleeper; and, as he gazed, a low music breathed throughout the chamber. Surprised and awed, Chairolas let the casket fall from his hands. The intruder took it from the ground, read the inscription, and applied his hand to the key;—it turned not;—Chairolas laughed aloud;—the stranger sighed, and drew forth from his breast a little tuft of swan's down—he laid it upon the casket—again turned the key—the casket opened at once, and within lay a small golden heart. At that instant a voice broke from the heart. "Thou hast found the charm," it said; and, at the same time, the virgin woke, and as she bent her eyes upon the last comer, she said, with unutterable tenderness, "It is of thee, then, that I have so long dreamed." The stranger fell at her feet. And Chairolas, unable to witness his rival's happiness, fled from the pavilion.

"Accursed that I am!" he groaned aloud. "If I had not cast away the fairy gift, *she* would have been mine!"

CHAPTER X.

For several days the unfortunate prince wandered through the woods and wastes, supporting himself on wild berries, and venting, in sighs and broken exclamations, his grief and rage. At length he came to the shores of a wide and glassy sea,—a sea more lovely than ever in the odorous south basking in the purpling hues of an Ausonian sun. Its waves crisped over golden sands with a delicious and heavenly music; the air was scented with unspeakable fragrance, wafted from trees peculiar to the clime, and bearing at the same time the blossom and the fruit. At a slight distance from the shore was an island which seemed one garden—the fabled bowers of the Hesperides. Studded it was with ivory palaces, delicious fountains, and streams

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that wound amidst groves of asphodel and amaranth. And everywhere throughout the island wandered groups whose faces the prince could distinctly see, and those faces were made beautiful by unruffled peace and happiness unalloyed. Laughter—how different from that of Chrysaor!—was wafted to his ear, and the boughs of the trees, as they waved to the fragrant wind, gave forth melodies more exquisite than ever woke from the lyres of Lycia or Ionia.

Wearied and exhausted, the prince gazed upon the Happy Isle, and longed to be a partaker of its bliss, when, turning his eyes a little to the right, he saw, from a winding in the shore on which he stood, a vessel, with silken streamers, seemingly about to part for the opposite isle. Several persons of either sex were crowding into the vessel, and already waving their hands to the groups upon the island. Chairolas hastened to the spot. He pushed impatiently through the crowd; he was about to enter the vessel, when a venerable old man stopped and accosted him.

"Would you go, stranger, to the Happy Isle?"

"Yes! Quick—quick, let me pass!"

"Stranger, whoever would enter the vessel must comply first with the conditions and pay the passage."

"I have some jewels left still," said Chairolas, haughtily. "I will pay the amount ten times over."

"We require neither jewels nor money," returned the old man, gravely. "What you must produce is the feather of a pigeon."

Chairolas shrunk back aghast. "But," said he, "I have no longer a pigeon's feather!"

The old man gazed at him with horror. The passengers set up a loud cry—"He has no pigeon's feather!" They pushed him back, the vessel parted, and Chairolas was left upon the strand.

CHAPTER XI.

CURSING his visits to Chrysaor and Apatia, which had cost him so dear and given him so little in return, Chairolas tore himself from the sea-shore and renewed his travels.

Towards the noon of the following day he entered a valley covered with immense sunflowers and poppies. Anything so gaudy he had never before beheld. Here and there were rocks, evidently not made by nature;—mounds

raised by collections of various rubbish, ornamented with artificial ruins and temples. Sometimes he passed through grottoes formed by bits of coloured glass and shells, intended to imitate spars and even jewels. The only birds that inhabited the boughs were parrots and mock-birds. They made a most discordant din; but they meant it for imitations of nightingales and canaries. The flare of the poppies and the noise of the birds were at first intolerable, but by degrees the wanderer became used to them, and at length found them charming.

"How delightful this is!" said he, flinging himself under a yew-tree, which was cut in the shape of a pagoda. "So cheerful—so gay! After all I am as well off here as in the Happy Isle. Nay, I think there is a greater air of comfort in the sight of these warm sunflowers than in those eternal amaranths; and certainly, the music of these parrots is exceedingly lively!"

While thus soliloquising the prince saw an old baboon walk leisurely up to him. The creature supported itself upon a gold-headed staff. It wore a long wig and a three-cornered hat. It had a large star of coloured glass on its breast; and an apron of sky-blue round its middle.

As the baboon approached, Chairolas was much struck by its countenance; the features were singularly intelligent and astute, and seemed even more so from a large pair of spectacles, which gave the animal a learned look about the eyes.

"Prince!" said the baboon, "I am well acquainted with your adventures, and I think I can be of service to you in your present circumstances."

"Can you give me the lady I saw in the enchanted castle?"

"No!" answered the baboon. "But a man who has seen so much of the world knows, that after a little time one lady is not better than another."

"Can you then admit me to the Happy Isle?"

"No! but you said rightly just now, that this valley was at least as agreeable."

"Can you give me back my tuft of swan's down and my pigeon's feather?"

"No! but I can imitate them so exactly that the imitations will be equally useful. Meanwhile, come and dine with me."

Chairolas followed the baboon into a cave, where he was sumptuously served by pea-green monkeys to dishes of barbecued squirrels.

After dinner the baboon and the prince renewed their conversation. From his host, Chairolas learned that the regions called "the unknown" by the people of Paidā, were of unlimited extent, inhabited by various nations; that no two of his predecessors had ever met with the same adventures, though most of them had visited both Chrysaor and Apatia. The baboon declared he had been of use to them all. He was, indeed, an animal of exceeding age and experience, and had a perfect recollection of the cities before the deluge.

He made out of the silky hair of a white fox, a most excellent imitation of the lost tuft of swan's down: and from the breast of a vulture, he plucked a feather which any one at a distance might mistake for a pigeon's.

Chairolas received them with delight.

"And now, prince," said the baboon, "observe, that while you may show these as openly as you please, it will be prudent to conceal the eagle's feather that you have yet left. No inconvenience results from parading the false,—much danger from exhibiting the true. Take this little box of adamant, lock up the eagle's feather in it, and whenever you meditate any scheme or exploit, open it and consult the feather. In future you will find that it has a voice, and can answer when you speak to it."

Chairolas stayed some days in the baboon's valley, and then once more renewed his travels. What was his surprise to find himself, on the second day of his excursion, in the same defile as that which had conducted him from his paternal realms. He computed, for the first time, the months he had spent in his wanderings, and found that the three years were just accomplished. In less than an hour the prince was at the mouth of the defile, where a numerous cavalcade had been for some days assembled to welcome his return and conduct him home.

CHAPTER XII.

THE young prince was welcomed at Paidā with the greatest enthusiasm. Every one found him prodigiously improved. He appeared in public with the false swan's

down and the false pigeon's feather. They became him even better than the true ones, and he indeed had taken care to have them set in much more magnificent jewels. But the prince was a prey to one violent and master passion—Ambition. This, indeed, had always been a part of his character; but previous to his travels it had been guided by generous and patriotic impulses. It was so no longer. He spent whole days in conversing with the eagle's feather, though the feather, indeed, never said but one word, which was—"WAR."

At that time a neighbouring people had chosen five persons instead of two to inspect the treasury accounts. Chairolas affected to be horror-struck with the innovation. He declared it boded no good to Paidá; he declaimed against it night and day. At last, he so inflamed the people, that, despite the reluctance of the king, war was declared. An old general of great renown headed the army. Chairolas was appointed second in command. They had scarcely reached the confines of the enemy's country, when Chairolas became no less unhappy than before. "Second in command! why not first?" He consulted his demon feather. It said, "FIRST." It spoke no other word. The old general was slow in his movements; he pretended that it was unwise to risk a battle at so great a distance from the capital; but in reality, he hoped the appearance of his army would awe the enemy into replacing the two treasurers, and so secure the object of the war without bloodshed. Chairolas penetrated this design, so contrary to his projects. He wrote home to his father, to accuse the general of taking bribes from the enemy. The old king readily believed one whom the fairy had so endowed. The general was recalled and beheaded. Chairolas succeeded to the command. He hastened to march to the city, which he took and burned; but, instead of replacing the two treasurers, he appointed one chief—himself; and twenty subordinate treasurers—his officers.

Never was prince so popular as Chairolas on his return from his victories. He was intoxicated by the sweetness of power and the desire of yet greater glory. He longed to reign himself—he sighed to think his father was so healthy. He shut himself up in his room and talked to his feather; its word now was "KING." Shortly afterwards Chairolas (who was the idol of the soldiers) seized the

palace, issued a proclamation that his father was in his dotage, and had abdicated the throne in his favour. The king was put into prison, and a day or two afterwards found dead in his bed. Chairolas mourned for three months, and everybody compassionated his grief.

From that time Chairolas, now the monarch of Paidá, gave himself up to his ruling passion. He extended his fame from east to west—he was called the Great Chairolas. But his subjects became tired of war; their lands were ravaged—their treasury exhausted—new taxes were raised for new conquests, and at length Chairolas was no longer called the “Great,” but the “Tyrant.”

CHAPTER XIII.

As Chairolas advanced in years, he left off wearing the false swan's down and the false pigeon's feather. He had long ceased to lock up his eagle-plume; he carried it constantly in his helmet, that it might whisper with ease into his ear. He had ceased to be popular with any class the moment he abandoned the presents of the baboon. By degrees a report spread through the nation that the king was befriended by an evil spirit, and that the eagle's plume was a talisman which secured to the possessor—while it rendered him grasping, cruel, and avaricious—prosperity, power, and fame. A conspiracy was formed to rob the king of his life and talisman at once. At the head of the conspiracy was the king's heir, Belmanes. They took their measures so well, that they succeeded in seizing the palace. They penetrated into the chamber of the Great Chairolas,—they paused at the threshold on hearing his voice,—he was addressing the fatal talisman.

“The ordeal,” he said, “through which I passed robbed me of thy companions; but no ordeal could rob me of thee. I rule my people with a rod of iron; I have spread my conquests to the farthest regions to which the banner of Paidá was ever wafted. I am still dissatisfied—what more can I desire?”

“Death!” cried the conspirators; and the king fell pierced to the heart. Belmanes seized the eagle's plume: it crumbled into dust in his grasp.

After the death of Chairolas, the following sentences were written in gold letters before the gates of the great

academy of Paidā by a priest who pretended to be inspired :—

“The ridicule of common men aspires to be the leveller of genius.”

“To renounce a virtue, because it has made thee suffer from fraud, is to play the robber to thyself.”

“Wouldst thou imitate the properties of the swan and the pigeon, borrow from the fox and the vulture. But no man can wear the imitations all his life: when he abandons them, he is undone.”

“If thou hast three virtues, and lovest two, the third, by itself, may become a vice. There is no blessing to the world like AMBITION, joined to SYMPATHY and BENEVOLENCE; no scourge to the world, like ambition divorced from them.”

“The choicest gifts of the most benevolent genii are impotent, unless accompanied by a charm against experience.”

“The charm against experience is woven by two spirits—Patience and Self-esteem.”

On these sentences nine sects of philosophy were founded. Each construed them differently; each produced ten thousand volumes in support of its interpretation; and no man was ever made better or wiser by the sentences, the sects, and the volumes.

ON INFIDELITY IN LOVE.

To the vulgar there is but one infidelity—that which, in woman at least, can never be expiated or forgiven. They know not the thousand shades in which change disguises itself—they trace not the fearful progress of the alienation of the heart. But to those who truly and deeply love, there is an infidelity with which the person has no share. Like ingratitude, it is punished by no laws. We are powerless to avenge ourselves.

When two persons are united by affection, and the love of the one survives that of the other, who can measure the anguish of the unfortunate who watches the extinction of a light which nothing can reillumine! It mostly happens, too, that the first discovery is sudden. There is a deep trustfulness in a loving heart; it is blind to the gradual decrease of sympathy—its divine charity attributes the absent eye, the chilling word, to a thousand causes, save the true one; care—illness—some worldly trouble—some engrossing thought; and (poor fool that it is!) endeavours by additional tenderness to compensate for the pain that is not of its own causing. Alas, the time has come when it can no longer compensate! It hath ceased to be the all-in-all to its cruel partner. Custom has brought its invariable curse—and indifference gathers round the place in which we had garnered up our soul. At length the appalling light breaks upon us. We discover we are no longer loved. And what remedy have we? None! Our first, our natural feeling is resentment. We are conscious of treachery; this ungrateful heart that has fallen from us, how have we prized and treasured it—how have we sought to shield it from every arrow—how have we pleased ourselves, in solitude and in absence, with yearning thoughts of its faith and beauty;—now it is ours no more! Then we

break into wild reproaches—we become exacting—we watch every look—we gauge every action—we are unfortunate—we weary—we offend. These our agonies—our impetuous bursts of passion—our ironical and bitter taunts, to which we half expect, as heretofore, to hear the soft word that turneth away wrath—these only expedite the fatal hour; they are new crimes in us; the very proofs of our bitter loves are treasured and repeated as reason why we should be loved no more:—as if without a throe, without a murmur, we could resign ourselves to so great a loss. Alas! it is with fierce convulsions that the temple is rent in twain, and we hear the Divinity depart. Sometimes we stand in silence, and with a full heart, gazing upon those hard cold eyes which never again can melt in tenderness upon us. And our silence is dumb—its eloquence is gone. We are no longer understood. We long to die in order to be avenged. We half pray for some great misfortune, some agonising illness, that it may bring to us our soother and our nurse. We say, “In affliction or in sickness it could not thus desert us.” We are mistaken. We are shelterless—the roof has been taken from our heads—we are exposed to any and every storm. Then comes a sharp and dread sentiment of loneliness and insecurity. We are left—weak children—in the dark. We are bereft more irrevocably than by death; for will even the Hereafter, that unites the happy dead who die lovingly, restore the love that has perished, ere life be dim?

What shall we do? We have accustomed ourselves to love and to be loved. Can we turn to new ties, and seek in another that which is extinct in one? How often is such a resource in vain! Have we not given to this—the treacherous and the false friend—the best years of our life—the youth of our hearts—the flower of our affections? Did we not yield up the harvest?—how little is there left for another to glean! This makes the crime of the moral infidelity. The one who takes away from us his or her love, takes from us also the love of all else. We have no longer, perhaps, the youth and the attractions to engage affection. Once we might have chosen out of the world—now the time is past. Who shall love us in our sear and yellow leaf, as in that time when we had most the qualities that win love? It was a beautiful sentiment of one whom her lord proposed to put away—“Give me, then, back,”

said she, "that which I brought to you." And the man answered in his vulgar coarseness of soul, "Your fortune shall return to you." "I thought not of fortune," said the lady; "give me back my real wealth—give me back my beauty and my youth—give me back the virginity of soul—give me back the cheerful mind, and the heart that had never been disappointed."

Yes; it is of these that the unfaithful rob us, when they dismiss us back upon the world, and tell us with a bitter mockery to form new ties. In proportion to the time that we have been faithful—in proportion to the feelings we have sacrificed—in proportion to the wealth of soul—of affection, of devotion, that we have consumed, are we shut out from the possibility of atonement elsewhere. But this is not all—the other occupations of the world are suddenly made stale and barren to us! the daily avocations of life—the common pleasures—the social diversions so tame in themselves, had had their charm when we could share, and talk over, them with another. It was sympathy which made them sweet—the sympathy withdrawn they are nothing to us—worse than nothing. The talk has become the tinkling cymbal, and society the gallery of pictures. Ambition, toil, the great aims of life—even these abruptly cease to excite. What, in the first place, made labour grateful and smoothed the sharp pathways of ambition? Was it not the hope that their rewards would be reflected upon another self? Now there is no other self! And, in the second place (and this is a newer consideration), does it not require a certain calmness and freedom of mind for great efforts? Persuaded of the possession of what most we value, we can look abroad with cheerfulness and hope;—the consciousness of a treasure inexhaustible by external failures, makes us speculative and bold. Now, all things are coloured by our despondency; our self-esteem—that necessary incentive to glory—is humbled and abased. Our pride has received a jarring and bitter shock. We no longer feel that we are equal to stern exertion. We wonder at what we have dared before. And therefore it is, that when Othello believes himself betrayed, the occupations of his whole life suddenly become burthensome and abhorred.

"Farewell," he saith,

"Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!"

And then, as the necessary but unconscious link in the chain of thought, he continues at once—

*"Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue! oh, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
Farewell!—Othello's occupation's gone."*

But there is another and a more permanent result from this bitter treason. Our trustfulness in human nature is diminished. We are no longer the credulous enthusiasts of good. The pillars of the moral world seem shaken. We believe, we hope, no more from the faith of others. If the one whom we so worshipped, and so served—who knew us in our best years—to whom we have offered countless, daily offerings—whom we put in our heart of hearts—against whom if a world hinted, we had braved a world—if *this one* has deserted us, *who* then shall be faithful?

At length, we begin to reconcile ourselves to the worst; gradually we gather the moss of our feelings from this heart which has become to us as stone. Our pride hardens down into indifference. Ceasing to be loved, we cease to love. Seasons may roll away, all other feelings ebb and flow. Ambition may change into apathy—generosity may sour into avarice—we may forget the enmities of years—we may make friends of foes; but the love we have lost is never renewed. On that dread vacuum of the breast the temple and the garden rise no more:—that feeling, be it hatred, be it scorn, be it indifference, which replaces love, endures to the last. And, altered for ever to the one—how many of us are altered for ever to the world;—neither so cheerful, nor so kind, nor so active in good, nor so incredulous of evil as we were before! The deluge of Passion has rolled back—the earth is green again. But we are in a new world. And the new world is but the sepulchre of the old.

FI-HO-TI;
OR,
THE PLEASURES OF REPUTATION.

A CHINESE TALE.

FI-HO-TI was considered a young man of talents; he led, in Pekin, a happy and comfortable life. In the prime of youth, of a highly respectable family, and enjoying a most agreeable competence, he was exceedingly popular among the gentlemen whom he entertained at his board, and the ladies who thought he might propose. Although the Chinese are not generally sociable, Fi-ho-ti had ventured to set the fashion of giving entertainments, in which ceremony was banished for mirth. All the pleasures of life were at his command: he drank, though without excess, the cup of enjoyment;—ate, laughed, and loved his fill. No man in Pekin was more awake during the day, or enjoyed a serener slumber during the night.

In an evil hour, it so happened that Fi-ho-ti discovered that he possessed genius. A philosopher,—who, being also his uncle, had the double right, both of philosophy and relationship, to say everything unpleasant to him,—took it into his head to be very indignant at the happy life which Fi-ho-ti so peacefully enjoyed.

Accordingly, one beautiful morning he visited our young Chin-Epicurean. He found him in his summer-house, stretched on luxurious cushions, quaffing the most delicious tea, in the finest little porcelain cups imaginable, reading a Chinese novel, and enlivening the study, from time to time, by a light conversation with a young lady, who had come to visit him.

Our philosopher was amazingly shocked at the prospect of so much comfort. Nothing could be more unphilosophical: for the duty of Philosophy being to charm us with life, she is anxious, in the first place, to make it a burden to us. The goddess is enamoured of Patience, but indignant at Pleasure.

Our sage was a man very much disliked and very much respected. Fi-ho-ti rose from his cushions, a little ashamed of being detected in so agreeable an indolence, and reminded for the first time of the maxims of Chinese morality, which hold it highly improper for a gentleman to be seen with a lady. The novel fell from his hand; and the young lady, frightened at the long beard and the long nails of the philosopher, would have run away, if her feet would have allowed her: as it was, she summoned her attendants, and hastened to complain to her friends of the manner in which the pleasantest of *têtes-à-têtes* can be spoilt, when young men are so unfortunate as to have philosophers for uncles.

The mandarin,—for Fi-ho-ti's uncle enjoyed no less a dignity, and was entitled to wear a blue globe in his cap,*—seeing the coast clear, hemmed three times, and commenced his avuncular admonitions.

“Are you not ashamed, young man,” said he, “of the life that you lead?—are you not ashamed to be so indolent and so happy? You possess talents; you are in the prime of youth, you have already attained the rank of Keu-jin;†—are you deaf to the noble voice of ambition? Your country calls upon you for exertion,—seek to distinguish your name,—recollect the example of Confucius,—give yourself up to study,—be wise and be great.”

Much more to this effect spoke the mandarin, for he loved to hear himself talk; and, like all men privileged to give advice, he fancied that he was wonderfully eloquent. In this instance, his vanity did not deceive him; for it was the vanity of another that he addressed. Fi-ho-ti was moved; he felt he had been very foolish to be happy so long. Visions of disquietude and fame floated before him: he listened with attention to the exhortations of the philosopher; he resolved to distinguish himself, and to be wise.

The mandarin was charmed with the success of his visit; it was a great triumph to disturb so much enjoyment. He went home, and commenced a tract upon the advantages of philosophy.

Every one knows that in China learning alone is the passport to the offices of state: what rank and fortune are in other countries, learning is in the Celestial Empire.

* The distinction of mandarins of the third and fourth order.

† A collegiate grade, which renders those who attain it eligible to offices of state.

Fi-ho-ti surrendered himself to Knowledge. He retired to a solitary cavern, near upon Kai-fon-gu; he filled his retreat with books and instruments of science; he renounced all social intercourse; the herbs of the plain and the water of the spring sufficed the tastes hitherto accustomed to the most delicious viands of Pekin. Forgetful of love and of pleasure, he consigned three of the fairest years of his existence to uninterrupted labour. He instructed himself—he imagined he was capable of instructing others.

Fired with increasing ambition, our student returned to Pekin. He composed a work, which, though light and witty enough to charm the gay, was the origin of a new school of philosophy. It was at once bold and polished; and the oldest mandarin or the youngest beauty of Pekin could equally appreciate and enjoy it. In one word, Fi-ho-ti's book became the rage,—Fi-ho-ti was *the* author of his day.

Delighted by the novelty of literary applause, our young student more than ever resigned himself to literary pursuits. He wrote again, and again succeeded;—all the world declared that Fi-ho-ti had established his reputation, and he obtained the dazzling distinction of Bin-sze.

Was Fi-ho-ti the happier for his reputation? You shall judge.

He went to call upon his uncle, the mandarin. He imagined the mandarin would be delighted to find the success of his admonitions. The philosopher received him with a frigid embarrassment. He talked of the weather and the emperor,—the last pagoda and the new fashion in tea-cups: he said not a word about his nephew's books. Fi-ho-ti was piqued: he introduced the subject of his own accord.

"Ah!" said the philosopher, dryly, "I understand you have written something that pleases the women; no doubt you will grow solid as your judgment increases. But, to return to the tea-cups——"

Fi-ho-ti was chagrined: he had lost the affection of his learned uncle for ever; for he was now considered to be more learned than his uncle himself. The common mortification in success is to find that your own family usually hate you for it. "My uncle no longer loves me," thought he, as he re-entered his palanquin. "This is a misfortune." Alas!—it was the effect of REPUTATION!

The heart of Fi-ho-ti was naturally kind and genial; though the thirst of pleasure was cooled in his veins, he still cherished the social desires of friendship. He summoned once more around him the comrades of his youth: he fancied they, at least, would be delighted to find their friend not unworthy of their affection. He received them with open arms;—they returned his greeting with shyness, and an awkward affectation of sympathy;—their conversation no longer flowed freely—they were afraid of committing themselves before so clever a man;—they felt they were no longer with an equal, and yet they refused to acknowledge a superior. Fi-ho-ti perceived, with indescribable grief, that a wall had grown up between himself and the companions of past years; their pursuits, their feelings, were no longer the same. They were not proud of his success—they were jealous; the friends of his youth were the critics of his manhood.

"This, too, is a misfortune," thought Fi-ho-ti, as he threw himself at night upon his couch. Very likely:—it was the effect of REPUTATION!

"But if the old friends are no more, I will gain new," thought the student. "Men of the same pursuits will have the same sympathies. I aspire to be a sage: I will court the friendship of sages."

This was a notable idea of Fi-ho-ti's. He surrounded himself with the authors, the wits, and the wise men of Peking. They ate his dinners,—they made him read their manuscripts—(and a bad handwriting in Chinese is no trifle!)—they told him he was a wonderful genius,—and they abused him anonymously every week in the Peking journals; for China, by the way, is perhaps the only despotism in the world in which the press is entirely free. The heart of Fi-ho-ti, yearning after friendship, found it impossible to expect a single friend amongst the literati of China; they were all too much engrossed with themselves to dream of affection for another. They had no talk—no thought—no feeling—except that which expressed love for their own books, and hatred for the books of their contemporaries.

One day Fi-ho-ti had the misfortune to break his leg. The most intimate of his acquaintance among the literati found him stretched on his couch, having just undergone the operation of setting.

"Ah!" said the author, "how very unlucky—how very unfortunate!"

"You are extremely obliging," said Fi-ho-ti, touched by his visitor's evident emotion.

"Yes, it is particularly unlucky that your accident should occur just at this moment: for I wanted to consult you about this passage in my new book before it is published to-morrow!"

The broken leg of his friend seemed to the author only as an interruption to the pleasure of reading his own works.

But, above all, Fi-ho-ti found it impossible to trust men who gave the worst possible character of each other. If you believed the literati themselves, so envious, malignant, worthless, unprincipled a set of men as the literati of Peking never were created! Every new acquaintance he made told him an anecdote of an old acquaintance which made his hair stand on end. Fi-ho-ti began to be alarmed. He contracted more and more the circle of his society; and resolved to renounce the notion of friendship amongst men of similar pursuits.

Even in the remotest provinces of the Celestial Empire the writings of Fi-ho-ti were greatly approved. The gentlemen quoted him at their tea, and the ladies wondered whether he was good-looking; but this applause—this interest that he inspired—never reached the ears of Fi-ho-ti. He beheld not the smiles he called forth by his wit, nor the tears he excited by his pathos:—all that he saw of the effects of his reputation was in the abuse he received in the Peking journals; he there read, every week and every month, that he was but a very poor sort of creature. One journal called him a fool, another a wretch; a third seriously deposed that he was hump-backed; a fourth that none of his sentiments could be found in the works of Confucius. In Peking, any insinuation of originality is considered as a suspicion of the most unpardonable guilt. Other journals, indeed, did not so much abuse as misrepresent him. He found his doctrines twisted into all manner of shapes. He could not defend them—for it is not dignified to reply to all the Peking journals; but he was assured by his flatterers that truth would ultimately prevail, and posterity do him justice. "Alas!" thought Fi-ho-ti, "am I to be deemed a culprit all my life, in order that I may be

acquitted after death? Is there no justice for me until I am past the power of malice? Surely this is a misfortune!" Very likely:—it was the necessary consequence of REPUTATION!

Fi-ho-ti now began to perceive that the desire of fame was a chimera. He was yet credulous enough to follow another chimera, equally fallacious. He said to himself—"It was poor and vain in me to desire to shine. Let me raise my heart to a more noble ambition;—let me desire only to instruct."

Fraught with this lofty notion, Fi-ho-ti now conceived a more solid and a graver habit of mind: he became rigidly conscientious in the composition of his works. He no longer desired to write what was brilliant, but to discover what was true. He erased, without mercy, the most lively images—the most sparkling aphorisms—if even a doubt of their moral utility crossed his mind. He wasted two additional years of the short summer of youth: he gave the fruits of his labour to the world in a book of the most elaborate research, the only object of which was to enlighten his countrymen. "This, at least, they cannot abuse," thought he, when he finished the last line. Ah! how much was he mistaken!

Doubtless, in other countries the public are remarkably grateful to any author for correcting their prejudices and combating their foibles; but in China, attack one orthodox error, prove to the people that you wish to elevate and improve them, and renounce all happiness, all tranquillity, for the rest of your life!

Fi-ho-ti's book was received with the most frigid neglect by the philosophers,—First, because the Pekin philosophers are visionaries, and it did not build a system upon visions,—and secondly, because of Fi-ho-ti himself, they were exceedingly jealous. But from his old friends, the journalists of Pekin—O Fo!—with what invective, what calumny, what abuse it was honoured! He had sought to be the friend of his race,—he was stigmatised as the direst of its enemies. He was accused of all manner of secret designs; the painted slippers of the mandarins were in danger; and he had evidently intended to muffle all the bells of the grand Pagoda! Alas! let no man wish to be a saint unless he is prepared to be a martyr.

"Is this injustice?" cried Fi-ho-ti to his flatterers.

"No," said they, with one voice; "No, Fi-ho-ti,—it is REPUTATION!"

Thoroughly disgusted with his ambition, Fi-ho-ti now resolved to resign himself once more to pleasure. Again he heard music, and again he feasted and made love. In vain!—the zest, the appetite was gone. The sterner pursuits he had cultivated of late years had rendered his mind incapable of appreciating the luxuries of frivolity. He had opened a gulf between himself and his youth;—his heart could be young no more.

"One faithful breast shall console me for all," thought he. "Yang-y-se is beautiful and smiles upon me; I will woo and win her."

Fi-ho-ti surrendered his whole soul to the new passion he had conceived. Yang-y-se listened to him favourably. He could not complain of cruelty: he fancied himself beloved. With the generous and unselfish ardour which belonged to his early character, and which in China is so especially uncommon, he devoted his future years to, he lavished the treasure of his affections upon, the object of his love. For some weeks he enjoyed a dream of delight: he woke from it too soon. A rival beauty was willing to attach to herself the wealthy and generous Fi-ho-ti. "Why," said she, one day, "why do you throw yourself away upon Yang-y-se? Do you fancy she loves you? You are mistaken: she has no heart; it is only her vanity that makes her willing to admit you as her slave." Fi-ho-ti was incredulous and indignant. "Read this letter," said the rival beauty. "Yang-y-se wrote it to me but the other day."

Fi-ho-ti read as follows:—

"We had a charming supper with the gay author last night, and wished much for you. You need not rally me on my affection for him; I do not love him, but I am pleased to command his attentions: in a word, my vanity is flattered with the notion of chaining to myself one of the most distinguished persons in Peking. But love—ah! *that* is quite another thing."

Fi-ho-ti's eyes were now thoroughly opened. He recalled a thousand little instances which had proved that Yang-y-se had been only in love with his celebrity.

He saw at once the great curse of distinction. Be renowned, and you can never be loved for yourself! As

you are hated not for your vices but your success, so are you loved not for your talents but their fame. A man who has reputation is like a tower whose height is estimated by the length of its shadow. The sensitive and high-wrought mind of Fi-ho-ti now gave way to a gloomy despondency. Being himself misinterpreted, calumniated, and traduced; and feeling that none loved him but through vanity, that he stood alone with his enemies in the world, he became the prey to misanthropy, and gnawed by perpetual suspicion. He distrusted the smiles of others. The faces of men seemed to him as masks; he felt everywhere the presence of deceit. Yet these feelings had made no part of his early character, which was naturally frank, joyous, and confiding. Was the change a misfortune? Possibly; but it was the effect of REPUTATION!

About this time, too, Fi-ho-ti began to feel the effects of the severe study he had undergone. His health gave way; his nerves were shattered; he was in that terrible revolution in which the Mind—that vindictive labourer—wreaks its ire upon the enfeebled taskmaster, the Body. He walked the ghost of his former self.

One day he was standing pensively beside one of the streams that intersect the gardens of Pekin, and, gazing upon the waters, he muttered his bitter reveries. "Ah!" thought he, "why was I ever discontented with happiness? I was young, rich, cheerful; and life to me was a perpetual holyday: my friends caressed me, my mistress loved me for myself. No one hated, or maligned, or envied me. Like yon leaf upon the water, my soul danced merrily over the billows of existence. But courage, my heart! I have at least done some good; benevolence must experience gratitude—young Psi-ching, for instance! I have the pleasure of thinking that *he* must love me; I have made his fortune; I have brought him from obscurity into repute: for it has been my character as yet never to be jealous of others!"

Psi-ching was a young poet, who had been secretary to Fi-ho-ti. The student had discovered genius and insatiable ambition in the young man; he had directed and advised his pursuit; he had raised him into fortune and notice; he had enabled him to marry the mistress he loved. Psi-ching vowed to him everlasting gratitude.

While Fi-ho-ti was thus consoling himself with the idea

of Psi-ching's affection, it so happened that Psi-ching, and one of the philosophers of the day whom the public voice esteemed second to Fi-ho-ti, passed along the banks of the river. A tree hid Fi-ho-ti from their sight; they were earnestly conversing, and Fi-ho-ti heard his own name more than once repeated.

"Yes," said Psi-ching, "poor Fi-ho-ti cannot live much longer; his health is broken; you will lose a formidable rival when he is dead."

The philosopher smiled. "Why, it will certainly be a stone out of my way. You are constantly with him, I think?"

"I am. He is a charming person; but the real fact is, that, seeing he cannot live much longer, I am keeping a journal of his last days: in a word, I shall write the history of my distinguished friend. I think it will take much, and have a prodigious sale."

The talkers passed on.

Fi-ho-ti did not die so soon as was expected, and Psi-ching never published the journal from which he anticipated so much profit. But Fi-ho-ti ceased to be remarkable for the kindness of his heart and the philanthropy of his views. He was rather known for the sourness of his temper and the bitterness of his satire.

By degrees he rose into public eminence, and on the accession of a new emperor, Fi-ho-ti was commanded to ask any favour that he desired. The office of Tsung-tuh (or viceroy) of the rich province of Che-kiang, was just vacant. The courtiers waited breathless to hear the vacancy requested. The emperor smiled benignly—it was the post he secretly intended for Fi-ho-ti. "Son of heaven, and lord of a myriad of years," said the favourite, "suffer then thy servant to retire into one of the monasteries of Kai-fon-gu, and—to *change his name!*"

The last hope of peace that was left to Fi-ho-ti was to escape from—his REPUTATION.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD IN MEN AND BOOKS.

ROYALTY and its symbols were abolished in France. A showman of wild beasts possessed an immense Bengal tiger (the pride of his flock), commonly called the *Royal Tiger*. What did our showman do?—Why, he knew the world, and he changed the name of the beast from the *Tigre Royal* to the *Tigre National*! Horace Walpole was particularly charmed with this anecdote, for he knew the world as well as the showman. It is exactly these little things—the happy turn of a phrase—a well-timed pleasantry (which no unobservant man ever thinks of), that, while seeming humour, are in reality wisdom. There are changes in the vein of wit as in everything else. Sir William Temple tells us, that on the return of Charles II. none were more out of fashion than the old Earl of Norwich, who was esteemed the greatest wit of the time of Charles the First. But it is clear that the Earl of Norwich must have wanted knowledge of the world; he did not feel, as by an instinct, like the showman, how to vary an epithet—he stuck to the last to his *tigre royal*!

This knowledge of the world baffles our calculations—it does not always require experience. Some men take to it intuitively; their first step in life exhibits the same profound mastery over the minds of their contemporaries—the same subtle consideration—the same felicitous address, as distinguish the close of their career. Congreve had written his comedies at twenty-five; and Farquhar, the Fielding of the Drama, died young. I should like, above all things, a veracious account of the childhood of Talleyrand. What a world of shrewdness may he have vented in trundling his hoop! Shakspeare has given us the madness of Hamlet the youth, and of Lear the old man—

there is a deeper wisdom in the young man's thoughts than those of the old man.

Minds early accustomed to solitude usually make the keenest observers of the world, and chiefly for this reason—when few objects are presented to our contemplation, we seize them—we ruminate over them—we think, again and again, upon all the features they present to our examination; and we thus master the knowledge of the great book of Mankind, as Eugene Aram mastered that of Learning—by studying five lines at a time, and ceasing not from our labour till those are thoroughly acquired. A boy, whose attention has not been distracted by a multiplicity of objects—who, living greatly alone, is obliged therefore to think, not as a task, but as a diversion, emerges at last into the world—a shy man, but a deep observer. Accustomed to reflection, he is not dazzled by novelty; while it strikes his eye, it occupies his mind. Hence, if he sit down to describe what he sees, he describes it justly at once, and at first; and more vividly, perhaps, than he might in after-life, because it is newer to him. Perhaps, too, the moral eye resembles the physical—by custom familiarises itself with delusion, and inverts mechanically the objects presented to it, till the deceit becomes more natural than nature itself.

There are men who say they know the world, because they know its vices. Could we admit this claim, what sage would rival an officer at Bow Street, or the turnkey at Newgate? This would indeed be knowledge of the world, if the world were inhabited only by rogues. But pretenders of this sort are as bad judges of our minds as a physician would be of our bodies, if he had never seen any but those in a diseased state. Such a man would fancy health itself a disease! We generally find, indeed, that men are governed by their *weaknesses*, not their *vices*, and those weaknesses are often the most amiable part about them. The wavering Jaffier betrays his friend through a weakness, which a hardened criminal might equally have felt, and which, in that criminal, might have been the origin of his guilt. It is the knowledge of these weaknesses, as by a glance, that serves a man better in the understanding and conquest of his species, than a knowledge of the vices to which they lead—it is better to seize the one cause than ponder over the thousand effects. It is

the former knowledge which I chiefly call the knowledge of the world. It is this which immortalised Molière in the drama, and distinguished Talleyrand in action.

It has been asked whether the same worldly wisdom which we admire in a writer would, had occasion brought him prominently forward, have made him equally successful in action? Certainly not, as a necessary consequence. Swift was the most sensible writer of his day, and one of the least sensible politicians, in the selfish sense—the only sense in which he knew it—of the word. How is this difference between the man and the writer to be accounted for? Because, in the writer, the infirmities of constitution are either concealed or decorated by genius: not so in the man; fretfulness, spleen, morbid sensitiveness, eternally spoil our plans in life—but they often give an interest to our plans on paper. To show wisdom in a book, it is but necessary that we should possess the theoretical wisdom; but in life it requires not only the theoretical wisdom, but the practical ability to act up to it. We may know exactly what we ought to do, but we may not have the fortitude to do it. “Now,” says the shy man in love, “I ought to go and talk to my mistress—my rival is with her—I ought to make myself as agreeable as possible—I ought to throw that fellow in the shade by my *bons mots* and my compliments.” Does he do so? No! he sits in a corner and scowls at the lady. He is in the miserable state described by Persius. He knows what is good and cannot perform it. Yet this man, if an author, from the very circumstance of feeling so bitterly that his constitution is stronger than his reason, would have made his lover in a book all that he could not be himself in reality. Hence the best advisers of *our* conduct are often those who are the least prudent in the regulation of their own. Their sense is clear when exerted for us, but vanity, humour, passion, blind them when they act for themselves.

There is a sort of wit peculiar to knowledge of the world, and we usually find that writers, who are supposed to have the most exhibited that knowledge in their books, are also commonly esteemed the wittiest authors of their country—Horace, Plautus, Molière, Le Sage, Voltaire, Cervantes, Shakspeare, Fielding, Swift;* and this is, be-

* Let me mention two political writers of the present day—men equally remarkable for their wit and wisdom—Sidney Smith, and the Editor of the

cause the essence of the most refined species of wit *is truth*. Even in the solemn and grave Tacitus, we come perpetually to sudden turns—striking points, of sententious brilliancy, which make us smile, from the depth itself of their importance;—an aphorism is always on the borders of an epigram.*

It is remarkable that there is scarcely any *very popular* author of great imagination, in whose works we do not recognise that common sense which is knowledge of the world, and which is so generally supposed by the superficial to be in direct opposition to the imaginative faculty. When an author does not possess it eminently, he is never eminently *popular*, whatever be his *fame*. Compare Scott and Shelley, the two most *imaginative* authors of their time. The one, in his wildest flights, never loses sight of common sense—there is an affinity between him and his humblest reader; nay, the more discursive the flight, the closer that affinity becomes. We are even more wrapped in the author when he is with his *Spirits of the Mountain and Fell*—with the mighty dead at Melrose, than when he is leading us through the humours of a guard-room, or confiding to us the interview of lovers. But Shelley disdained common sense. Of his “*Prince Athanase*” we have no earthly comprehension—with his “*Prometheus*” we have no human sympathies; and the grander he becomes, the less popular we find him. Writers who do not, in theory, know their kind, may be admired, but they can never be popular. And when we hear men of unquestionable genius complain of not being appreciated by the herd, it is because they are not themselves skilled in the feelings of the herd. For what is knowledge of mankind, but the knowledge of their feelings, their humours, their caprices, their passions?—Touch these, and you gain attention—develop these, and you have conquered your audience.

Among writers of an inferior reputation we often discover a sufficient shrewdness and penetration into human foibles to startle us in details, while they cannot carry their knowledge far enough to please us on the whole. They can hit off some feature in nature by a happy stroke, but

“*Examiner*,” Mr. Fonblanque; the latter writer (however we may differ from his politics) is perhaps the greatest master of that art which makes “words like sharp swords,” that our age has produced.

* And every one will recollect the sagacious sneer of Gibbon.

they violate all the likeness before they have concluded the picture—they charm us with a reflection and revolt us by a character. Sir John Suckling is one of these writers: his correspondence is witty and thoughtful, and his plays—but little known in comparison with his songs—abound with just remarks and false positions, the most natural lines and the most improbable inventions. Two persons in one of these plays are under sentence of execution, and the poet hits off the vanity of the one by a stroke worthy of a much greater dramatist.

“I have something troubles me,” says Pellagrin.

“What’s that?” asks his friend.

“The people,” replies Pellagrin, “will say, as we go along, *‘thou art the properer fellow!’*”

Had the whole character been conceived like that sentence, I should not have forgotten the name of the play, and instead of making a joke, the author would have consummated a creation. Both Madame de Staël and Rousseau appear to me to have possessed this sort of imperfect knowledge. Both are great in aphorisms, and feeble in realising conceptions of flesh and blood. When Madame de Staël tells us “that great losses, so far from binding men more closely to the advantages they still have left, at once loosen all ties of affection,” she speaks like one versed in the mysteries of the human heart, and expresses exactly what she wishes to convey; but when she draws the character of Coriune’s lover, she not only confounds all the moral qualities into one impossible compound, but she utterly fails in what she evidently attempts to picture. The proud, sensitive, generous, high-minded Englishman, with a soul at once alive to genius, and fearing its effect—daring as a soldier, timid as a man—the slave of love that tells him to scorn the world, and of opinion that tells him to revere it—this is the new, the delicate, the many-coloured character Madame de Staël conceived, and nothing can be more unlike the heartless and whining pedant she has created.

In Rousseau’s “Julie,” every sentence Lord Edouard utters is full of beauty, and sometimes of depth, and yet those sentences give us no conception of the utterer himself. The expressions are all soul, and the character is all clay—nothing can be more brilliant than the sentiments, or more heavy than the speaker.

It is a curious fact, that the graver writers have not

often succeeded in plot and character in proportion to their success in the allurements of reflection, or the graces of style. While Goldsmith makes us acquainted with all the personages of his unrivalled story—while we sit at the threshold in the summer evenings and sympathise with the good vicar in his laudable zeal for monogamy—while ever and anon we steal a look behind through the lattice, and smile at the gay Sophia, who is playing with Dick, or fix our admiration on Olivia, who is practising an air against the young squire comes—while we see the sturdy Burchell crossing the stile, and striding on at his hearty pace with his oak cudgel cutting circles in the air—nay, while we ride with Moses to make his bargains, and prick up our ears when Mr. Jenkinson begins with “Ay, sir! the world is in its dotage;”—while in recalling the characters of that immortal tale, we are recalling the memory of so many living persons with whom we have dined, and walked, and argued—we behold in the gloomy “*Rasselas*” of Goldsmith’s sager contemporary a dim succession of shadowy images without life or identity—mere machines for the grinding of morals, and the nice location of sonorous phraseology. Perhaps, indeed, Humour is an essential requisite in the flesh-and-blood delineation of character; and a quick perception of the Ridiculous is necessary to the accurate insight into the True. We can better ascertain the profundity of Machiavel after we have enjoyed the unrivalled humour of his novel.

That delightful egotist—half-goodfellow, half-sage, half-rake, half-divine, the pet gossip of philosophy, the—in one word—inimitable and unimitated Montaigne, insists upon it in right earnest, that *continual* cheerfulness is the most indisputable sign of Wisdom; and that her estate, like that of things in the regions above the moon, is always calm, cloudless, and serene. And in the same essay he recites the old story of Demetrius the grammarian, who, finding in the temple of Delphos a knot of philosophers chatting away in high glee and comfort, said, “I am greatly mistaken, gentlemen, or by your pleasant countenances you are not engaged in any very profound discourse.” Whereon Heracleon answered the grammarian with a “Pshaw, my good friend! it does very well for fellows who live in a perpetual anxiety to know whether the future tense of the verb *Ballo* should be spelt with one *l* or two, to knit their

brows and look solemn; but we who are engaged in discoursing of true philosophy, are cheerful as a matter of course!" Heracleon the magician knew what he was about when he resolved to be wise. And yet, after all, it is our constitution and not our learning that makes us one thing or the other—grave or gay, lively or severe! We may form our philosophy in one school, but our feelings may impel us to another; and while our tenets rejoice with Democritus, our hearts may despond with Heraclitus. And, in fact, it requires not only all that our wisdom can teach us, but, perhaps, also something of a constitution of mind naturally sanguine and elastic, to transmute into golden associations the baser ores of our knowledge of the world. Deceit and Disappointment are but sorry stimulants to the Spirits! "The pleasure of the honey will not pay for the smart of the sting." *

As we know, or fancy that we know, mankind, there is a certain dimness that falls upon the glory of all we see. "The lily is withered, the purple of the violet turned into paleness;" † without growing perhaps more selfish, we contract the circle of our enjoyments. We do not hazard—we do not venture as we once did. The sea that rolls before us proffers to our curiosity no port that we have not already seen. About this time, too, our ambition changes its character—it becomes more a thing of custom than of ardour. We have begun our career—shame forbids us to leave it; but I question whether any man, moderately wise, does not see how small is the reward of pursuit. Nay, ask the oldest, the most hackneyed adventurer of the world, and you will find he has some dream at his heart, which is more cherished than all the honours he seeks—some dream perhaps of a happy and serene retirement, which has lain at his breast since he was a boy, and which he will never realise. The trader and his retreat at Highgate are but the type, of Walpole and his palace at Houghton. The worst feature in our knowledge of the world is, that we are wise to little purpose—we penetrate the hearts of others, but we do not content our own. Every wise man feels that he ought not to be ambitious, nor covetous, nor subject to emotion; yet the wisest go on toiling and burning to the last. Men who have declaimed most against ambition

* Jeremy Taylor: Sermon vi. Part 2.

† Jeremy Taylor: "Contemplations of the State of Man."

have been among the most ambitious; so that, at the best, we only become wise for the sake of writing books which the world seldom values till we are dead—or of making laws and speeches, which, when dead, the world hastens to forget. “When all is done, human life is at the greatest and the best but like a froward child, that must be played with and humoured a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over.”*

* Sir William Temple.

ON THE PASSION FOR THE UNIVERSAL.

IN earlier youth I was smitten by that ambition for the Universal, not uncommon perhaps in persons of versatile and lively imagination, who, easily mastering whatever they attempt, find in labour only a triumph to their self-esteem. I held it as a doctrine, that the mind in its utmost perfection should not be utterly ignorant of any species of human knowledge or accomplishment within its reach, and that the body being a part of us, and that part most prominent and visible, had also a legitimate right to its careful education;—for we are not all soul. The frame should indeed be the servant of the mind—but neglect or scorn the slave too much, and he rebels, and may become the tyrant in his turn. The notion of this all-accomplishment, mental and corporeal, is an old one—it is one upon which the character of the Ancient Nations, and of Athens especially, was formed. Alcibiades and Pericles were but incarnations of the genius of their country. But, in truth, the task of circling the round of knowledge was more practicable two thousand years ago than it is now: books were few, speculations contracted, learning flowed with a mighty stream—but not from numerous sources. All the fruits of the Divine Tree were near at hand to the wanderer, and not scattered as they are at present, in myriad grafts, over the surface of the globe. If this was their advantage in the mental, so in the corporeal education, the life which the ancients led—their habits and their customs, so entirely dissimilar from the indolent apathy of modern times, were well suited to perfect all the faculties, and to gift with all the graces.

The bath and the gymnasium, which made a necessary

part of their existence, served, without an effort, to strengthen and to embellish. Their very habit of existence brought them beauty. Again; the laws which at Athens were referred entirely to the people—who had to decide, not more upon their taxes and their ministers than upon refinements in music or innovations at the theatre—to approve the new statue, and consider the ornaments of the projected temple—served to diffuse the popular attention over all the sublimer arts and elegancies of life: it was necessary to have an eye to grace, an ear to poetry, a nerve to beauty, in order to discharge the daily duties of a citizen. In all things the people were made critics and gentlemen, by being in all things legislators and umpires.—Absolute liberty produced universal genius. The stir and ferment, and astonishing activity of those old republics, forced Intellect almost beyond Nature. Their very corruption fostered divine seeds, and the creatures it generated were gods.

These causes combined gave to our ancient models that character of “the all-accomplished” which the moderns, under different circumstances of society, can never but imperfectly attain.

The division of labour has become necessary to a vast and complex order of civilisation, and, no longer living in petty cities but over-populated nations, one man cannot hope successfully to unite the poet, the soldier, the philosopher, the artist, and the critic. The true character of the Universal has passed away for ever. It is fortunate for us that the world, somewhat betimes and somewhat roughly, rouses us from this ambition, too excursive for common purposes, if pursued too long—and, that, settled early to the pursuit of one career, or to the mastery of one art, we accustom ourselves not to chase the golden apples which lure us from our goal.

Yet for a short time, at least, this passion has its uses, which last throughout our lives: without aiming in youth at the acquisition of many things, we should scarcely in manhood attain perfection in one. Insensibly, through a wide and desultory range, we gather together the vast hoard of thoughts and images—of practical illustrations of life—of comparisons of the multiform aspects of Truth, whether in men or books, which are the aids, and corroboration.

rants, and embellishments of the single and sole pursuit to which we finally attach ourselves.

We are thus in no danger of becoming the machines of the closet, or the feasters upon one idea. Each individual research into which we have entered may not have been carried to a sufficient depth to open a separate mine. But the broad surface we have ploughed up yields us an abundant harvest. To an active mind it is astonishing what use may be made of every the pettiest acquisition. Gibbon tells us with solemn complacency of the assistance he derived to his immortal work—the sieges it details and the strategy it expounds—from having served in the Militia! A much wider use of accomplishment is to be found in the instance of Milton:—what a wonderful copiousness of all knowledge, seemingly the most motley, the most incongruous, he has poured into his great poem! Perhaps there is no mighty river of genius which is not fed by a thousand tributary streams. Milton is indeed an august example of the aspiration to the Universal. This severe republican, who has come down to the vulgar gaze in colours so stern though so sublime—had in his early tendencies all that most distinguishes our ideal of the knight and cavalier. No man in these later days was ever by soul and nature so entirely the all-accomplished and consummate gentleman. Beautiful in person—courtly in address—skilled in the gallant exercise of arms—a master of each manlier as each softer art—versed in music—in song—in the languages of Europe—the admired gallant of the dames and nobles of Italy—the cynosure of all eyes “that rained influence and adjudged”—he, the destined Dante of England, was the concentration of our dreams of the Troubadour—and the reality of the imaginary Crichton. In his later life we find the haughty patriot recurring, with a patrician pride, to all the accomplishments he had mastered—the sword as well as lute; and if we could furnish forth the outline of the education he prescribes as necessary to others, we should have no reason to complain that the versatility and the range of Athenian genius had passed away.*

* In his letter to Master Samuel Hartlib, Milton does indeed startle even the most ambitious of modern scholars. After declaring, in his own stately manner, that he calls “a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously, *all* (!) the offices of

Yet this Greek yearning after all lore, not only that instructs, but embellishes, invariably exposes us, with the vulgar, to two charges—superficiality and frivolity—the last accusations which we are likely to deserve. *Perhaps no men are more superficial in their views than those who cultivate one branch of learning, and only one branch;—perhaps no men are less superficial than those who know the outlines of many.* A man, indeed, who in letters or statesmanship cultivates *only* one pursuit, can rarely master it thoroughly. It is by eternal comparisons of truth with truth, that we come to just and profound conclusions; the wider the range of comparisons, the more accurate our inferences. There is an experience of the intellect as well as of the observation, which never can be well attained by exclusive predilections and confined circles.

We find, therefore, in all the deepest masters of the human heart, or of the human mind, an amazingly searching and miscellaneous appetite for knowledge of all sorts, small or great. The statesman who wrote the “Prince,” wrote also comedies and a novel—a treatise on the military art—and poetry without end. Goethe was a botanist as well as a poet and a philosopher. Shakspeare seems, by the profuse allusions, “enamelling with pied flowers his thoughts of gold,”* to have diligently learned all that his age permitted to one self-educated and not versed betimes

peace and war (!) ” he proceeds to chalk out a general outline of rational studies for young gentlemen between twelve and twenty-one:—Grammar, arithmetic, agriculture, natural history, geometry, astronomy, geography, fortification, architecture, engineering, navigation, history of meteors, minerals, plants, and living creatures, as far as anatomy and the art of medicine. All this to be assisted by the “helpful experiences of hunters, fowlers, fishermen, shepherds, gardeners, apothecaries, architects, engineers, miners, anatomists.” And the above, by-the-by, before the tyro enters the “rural part of Virgil !” Then come ethics, theology, politics, law, as delivered first by Moses, and, “as far as human prudence can be trusted, Iycurgus, Solon, Zaleucus, Charondas,” and thence “to *all* the Roman edicts and tables, with their Justinian, and *so down to the Saxon and Common laws of England, and the statutes.*” Join to this French, Italian, Latin, Greek, Hebrew; “whereto it would be no impossibility to add the Chaldee and the Syrian dialect.” Thus accomplished, the pupils are to be made poets, authors, orators; and instead of cricket, in play-hours, they are “to serve out the rudiments of soldiership, in all the skill of embattling, marching, encamping, fortifying, besieging, and battering;” besides trips after the first two or three years; [after which Milton gravely declares he would not be *much* for their studying (!)]—to our navy to learn the practical knowledge of sailing and sea-fight. If all this would not make universal scholars, it would certainly make the most universal little dunces.

* Sir P. Sidney.

in the ancient languages or the physical sciences—yet even of these latter he had taught himself something. You find in him metaphors borrowed from the mechanical arts of life. It was an universal smattering which helped him to be profound. No less universal, no less accomplished, was Bacon, who may be called the Shakspeare of philosophy. With the same pen which demolished the Aristotelism of the schoolmen, he writes a treatise on the laws, a cure for the gout—the translation of a psalm, and an essay on plantations. The men who, on the contrary, are so careful to avoid the Superficial—who plummet only one source of learning, and think that, in order to penetrate to its depth, no time can be spared to sport over other fountains, are usually shallow and headstrong theorists. They go round and round in a narrow circle, and never discover the outlet. Such a man was that pedant mentioned by Boyle, who had devoted his whole life to the study of a single mineral, and who owned he had not ascertained a hundredth part of its properties. These men are not only superficial, they are the truly frivolous—they grow so wedded to their one pursuit, that its pettiest and most insignificant details have a grandeur in their eyes. They are for ever poring over the animalculæ on the one leaf of the Eden tree: they cannot see things that are large—they are spending their lives in the midst of the prodigal world in considering the hundredth part of the properties of a mineral!

Vulgar minds often mistake for frivolities what are but the indications of a certain refinement which pervades the whole character, and leaves its stamp upon small things as on great. Most remarkable men have one predominant passion of the intellect strongly developed, which pursues its object into minutiae. Thus with Goethe, that singular affection for order or harmony which made him the greatest literary *artist* that ever lived, displayed itself in the neatness of his handwriting—in his care of the nice arrangement of his furniture and papers—in his hatred to see even a blot of ink upon a manuscript. All this regard to trifles was not frivolity—it was a trait of character—it belonged to the artist: without it he would not have had the habit of mind which made him what he was. We may detect the same traits in a smaller degree in Pope. With him it was less the love of order than of neatness—(a *part*

of order.) In most poets the strongest intellectual passion is the love of beauty: and this often displays itself in the elegance of domestic detail. * * * * fastidious in the flow of a curtain, is not frivolous—he but manifests the same taste which gives him his acumen in works of art, and polishes to an excess of smoothness the ivory mechanism of his verse.

But this love of beauty, in all its aspects, is strongest in those whose early years have passed in the attempt to cultivate every faculty and excel in every pursuit. The students of the Universal acquire an almost intuitive instinct into the fluent harmony of things. Their early ambition opens to them a thousand sources of enjoyment. Wherever there is excellence they feel all the rapture of admiration. A landscape, a picture, a statue, a gem, a fine horse, a palace, the possessions of others—if worthy to be admired—their sense of enjoyment makes their own, while they regard;—sympathy, for the moment, appropriates them, and becomes the substitute of envy.

We all flatter ourselves in our favourite tendencies, and, for my own part, I may deceive myself as to the nature of mine—but I consider that to love the Beautiful in all things, to surround ourselves, as far as our means permit, with all its evidences, not only elevates the thoughts and harmonises the mind, but is a sort of homage that we owe to the gifts of God and the labours of man. The Beautiful is the Priest of the Benevolent.

Yet, the ambition of the Universal is neither safe nor prudent, unless we cultivate some one pursuit above all the rest, making the others only its ministrants or its reliefs. If we know a little of everything, it will not do to write upon everything—but choosing that career of imagination or of thought for which we feel ourselves most fitted, and making *this* our *main* object, all the rest that we know or enjoy illustrates and enlarges the scope of our chief design. It was wise in Milton, or in Homer, to pour the choicest of their multiform lore into their poems; but they might have been justly termed superficial had they written separate essays upon each division of knowledge which they prove themselves to have cultivated. Far from complaining that life is too long, I honour the frankness of the old sage, who, living to a hundred, said his only regret was to die so soon. So vast is the mind of man, so various

its faculties, so measureless the range of observation to feed and to elicit his powers, that if we had lived from the birth of the world till now, we could not have compassed a millionth part of that which our capacities, trained to the utmost, would enable us to grasp.—It requires an eternity to develop *all* the elements of the soul!

FERDINAND FITZROY;

OR, TOO HANDSOME FOR ANYTHING.

"My dear friend," said I, the other day, to a mother who was expressing her anxiety that her son should be as handsome as herself—"Believe me, that if beauty be a fatal gift for women, it is an inconvenient one to men. A handsome face is very much against a young gentleman destined to the professions. An attorney takes an instinctive dislike to an Adonis of a barrister. What prudent man would like Antinous for his family physician? The envy of our sex (much more jealous than yours) will not acknowledge Wisdom unless it has a snub nose. When Apollo came to earth, the highest employment he could obtain was that of a shepherd."

"Pooh!" replied my fair friend—"Has it not been well said, that a handsome face is a letter of recommendation?"

"It is a Bellerophon letter, madam, and betrays while it recommends. Permit me to tell you the history of Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy."

Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was one of those models of perfection of which a human father and mother can produce but a single example. Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was therefore an only son. He was such an amazing favourite with both his parents that they resolved to ruin him; accordingly, he was exceedingly spoiled, never annoyed by the sight of a book, and had as much plum-cake as he could eat. Happy would it have been for Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy could he always have eaten plum-cake and remained a child. "Never," says the Greek tragedian, "reckon a mortal happy till you have witnessed his end." A most beautiful creature was Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy! Such eyes—such hair—such teeth—such a figure—such manners,

too,—and such an irresistible way of tying his neckcloth ! When he was about sixteen, a crabbed old uncle represented to his parents the propriety of teaching Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy to read and write. Though not without some difficulty, he convinced them,—for he was exceedingly rich, and riches in an uncle are wonderful arguments respecting the nurture of a nephew whose parents have nothing to leave him. So our hero was sent to school. He was naturally a very sharp, clever boy ; and he came on surprisingly in his learning. The schoolmaster's wife liked handsome lads. "What a genius will Master Ferdinand Fitzroy be, if you take pains with him !" said she to her husband.

"Pooh, my dear ! it is of no use to take pains with him."

"And why, love ?"

"Because he is a great deal too handsome ever to be a scholar."

"That's true enough, my dear !" said the schoolmaster's wife.

So, because he was too handsome to be a scholar, Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy remained the lag of the fourth form !

They took our hero from school. "What profession shall he follow ?" said his mother.

"My first cousin is the lord-chancellor," said his father : "let him go to the bar."

The lord-chancellor dined there that day : Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was introduced to him ! His lordship was a little, rough-faced, beetle-browed, hard-featured man, who thought beauty and idleness the same thing—and a parchment skin the legitimate complexion for a lawyer.

"Send him to the bar !" said he, "no, no, that will never do !—Send him into the army ; he is much too handsome to become a lawyer."

"That's true enough," said the mother. So they bought Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy a cornetcy in the ——— regiment of Dragoons.

Things are not learned by inspiration. Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy had never ridden at school, except when he was hoisted ; he was, therefore, a very indifferent horseman ; they sent him to the riding-school, and everybody laughed at him.

"He is a d——d ass!" said Cornet Horsephiz, who was very ugly. "A horrid puppy!" said Lieutenant St. Squintem, who was still uglier. "If he does not ride better, he will disgrace the regiment!" said Captain Rivalhate, who was very good-looking. "If he does not ride better, we will cut him!" said Colonel Everdrill, who was a wonderful martinet. "I say, Mr. Bumpemwell (to the riding-master), make that youngster ride less like a miller's sack."

"Pooh, sir! *he* will never ride better."

"And why the d—l will he not?"

"Bless you, colonel, he is a great deal too handsome for a cavalry officer!"

"True!" said Cornet Horsephiz.

"Very true!" said Lieutenant St. Squintem.

"We must cut him!" said the colonel.

And Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was accordingly cut.

Our hero was a youth of susceptibility—he quitted the — regiment, and challenged the colonel. The colonel was killed!

"What improper behaviour in Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy!" said the colonel's relations.

"Very true!" said the world.

The parents were in despair! They were not rich: but our hero was an only son, and they sponged hard upon the crabbed old uncle!

"He is very clever," said they both, "and may do yet."

So they borrowed some thousands from the uncle, and bought his beautiful nephew a seat in parliament.

Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was ambitious, and desirous of retrieving his character. He fagged like a dragon—conned pamphlets and reviews—got Ricardo by heart—and made notes on the English constitution.

He rose to speak.

"What a handsome fellow!" whispered one member.

"Ah, a coxcomb!" said another.

"Never do for a speaker!" said a third, very audibly.

And the gentlemen on the opposite benches sneered and *heard*! Impudence is only indigenous in Milesia, and an orator is not made in a day. Discouraged by his reception, Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy grew a little embarrassed.

"Told you so!" said one of his neighbours.

"Fairly broke down!" said another.

"Too fond of his hair to have anything in his head," said a third, who was considered a wit.

"Hear, hear!" cried the gentlemen on the opposite benches.

Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy sat down—he had not shone; but, in reality, he had not failed. Many a first-rate speaker had made a less flourishing commencement; and many a county member had been declared a phoenix of promise upon half his merit.

Not so thought the heroes of corn-laws.

"Your Adonises never make orators!" said a crack speaker with a wry nose.

"Nor men of business either," added the chairman of a committee, with a face like a kangaroo's.

"Poor devil!" said the civilist of the set. "He's a deuced deal too handsome for work! By Jove, he is going to speak again!—this will never do; we must cough him down!"

And Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was accordingly coughed down.

Our hero was now seven or eight-and-twenty, handsomer than ever, and the admiration of all the young ladies at Almack's.

"We have nothing to leave you," said the parents, who had long spent their fortune, and now lived on the credit of having once enjoyed it. "You are the handsomest man in London; you must marry an heiress."

"I will," said Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy.

Miss Helen Convolvulus was a charming young lady, with a hare-lip and six thousand a-year. To Miss Helen Convolvulus then our hero paid his addresses.

Heavens! what an uproar her relations made about the matter. "Easy to see his intentions," said one: "a handsome fortune-hunter, who wants to make the best of his person!"—"handsome is that handsome does," says another; "he was turned out of the army, and murdered his colonel;"—"never marry a beauty," said a third;—"he can admire none but himself;" "will have so many mistresses," said a fourth;—"make you perpetually jealous," said a fifth;—"spend your fortune," said a sixth; "and break your heart," said a seventh.

Miss Helen Convolvulus was prudent and wary. She saw a great deal of justice in what was said; and was

sufficiently contented with liberty and six thousand a-year, not to be highly impatient for a husband; but our heroine had no aversion to a lover; especially to so handsome a lover as Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy. Accordingly she neither accepted nor discarded him; but kept him on hope, and suffered him to get into debt with his tailor and coach-maker, on the strength of becoming Mr. Fitzroy Convolvulus. Time went on, and excuses and delays were easily found; however, our hero was sanguine, and so were his parents. A breakfast at Chiswick, and a putrid fever, carried off the latter, within one week of each other; but not till they had blessed Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, and rejoiced that they had left him so well provided for.

Now, then, our hero depended solely upon the crabbed old uncle and Miss Helen Convolvulus;—the former, though a baronet and a satirist, was a banker and a man of business: he looked very distastefully at the Hyperion curls and white teeth of Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy.

"If I make you my heir," said he, "I expect you will continue the bank."

"Certainly, sir!" said the nephew.

"Humph!" grunted the uncle; "a pretty fellow for a banker!"

Debtors grew pressing to Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, and Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy grew pressing to Miss Helen Convolvulus. "It is a dangerous thing," said she, timidly, "to marry a man so admired,—will you be always faithful?"

"By heaven!" cried the lover.

"Heigho!" sighed Miss Helen Convolvulus; and Lord Rufus Pumilion entering, the conversation was changed.

But the day of the marriage was fixed; and Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy bought a new curriole. By Apollo, how handsome he looked in it! A month before the wedding-day the uncle died. Miss Helen Convolvulus was quite tender in her condolences—"Cheer up, my Ferdinand," said she; "for your sake, I have discarded Lord Rufus Pumilion!" "Adorable condescension!" cried our hero; "but Lord Rufus Pumilion is only four feet two, and has hair like a peony."

"All men are not so handsome as Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy!" was the reply.

Away goes our hero, to be present at the opening of his uncle's will.

"I leave," said the testator (who, I have before said, was a bit of a satirist), "my share of the bank, and the whole of my fortune, legacies excepted, to"—(here Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy wiped his beautiful eyes with his cambric handkerchief) "my natural son, John Spriggs, an industrious, pains-taking youth, who will do credit to the bank. I did once intend to have made my nephew Ferdinand my heir; but so curly a head can have no talent for accounts. I want my successor to be a man of business, not beauty; and Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy is a great deal too handsome for a banker; his good looks will, no doubt, win him any heiress in town. Meanwhile, I leave him, to buy a dressing-case, a thousand pounds."

"A thousand devils!" cried Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, banging out of the room. He flew to his mistress. She was not at home. "Lies," says the Italian proverb, "have short legs;" but truths, if they are unpleasant, have terribly long ones! The next day Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy received a most obliging note of dismissal.

"I wish you every happiness," said Miss Helen Convolvulus, in conclusion: "but my friends are right!—you are much too handsome for a husband!"

And the week following, Miss Helen Convolvulus became Lady Rufus Pumilion!

"Alas! sir," said the bailiff, as a day or two after the dissolution of parliament he was jogging along with Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, in a Hackney coach, bound to the King's Bench,— "Alas! sir, what a pity it is to take so handsome a gentleman to prison!"

JULIET'S TOMB IN VERONA.

"But I assure you, sir," said the cicerone, "that there is nothing to see in it."

"More than in all Verona."

The cicerone shrugged his shoulders, and we continued our way.

There is no town in Italy more interesting in its appearance than Verona. A quick and venerable melancholy broods over its streets and houses. Its architecture of all forms—its peculiar casements and balconies—the half-Gothic, half-classic stamp of its antiquity have, to my eyes, an inexpressible charm. I think to recognise something Shaksperian in the aspect of the place—it accords well with the memories with which he has associated its reverent name; and I own that I trod its motley streets with a less respect for its history than for its immortal legend. For, was it not here that the gay Mercutio and the haughty Tybalt ran their brief career?—along these very streets went the masqued troop, with their torch-bearers and merry music, on the night that Romeo made himself a guest in the halls of Capulet, and won the heart of the impassioned Juliet?—the Gothic lattice, the frequent balcony, the gardens seen through the iron gates that close yonder ancient court—do they not all breathe of Romeo, of Shakspeare, of Romance? Of that Romance which is steeped in the colours of so passionate, so intoxicating a love, that, in order even to comprehend it, we must lift ourselves out of our common and worldly nature—we must rise from what our youth has been made by the arid cares and calculating schemes of life—we must shut ourselves up, as it were, in a chamber of sweet dreams from which all realities must be rigidly excluded. We must call back to the heart, to the sense, to the whole frame, its first youth. We must

feel the blood pass through the veins as an elixir, and imagine that we are yet in that first era of the world when (according to the Grecian superstition) Love was the only deity that existed, and his breath was the religion of creation. Then and then only can we acknowledge that the legend of Romeo and Juliet does not pass the limits of nature. For the great characteristic of their love is youth—the sparkling and divine freshness of first years—its luxuriant imagination, its suddenness, and yet its depth—the conceits and fantasies which find common language too tame, and wander into sweet extravagance from the very truth of the passion;—all this belongs but to the flush and May of life, the beauty of our years—the sunny surface of the golden well. You see at once the *youthfulness* of that love, if you compare it with the love of Antony and Cleopatra, in another and no less wonderful tragedy of the great master's. The love, in either, passes the level of human emotions—it is the love of warmer hearts and stronger natures than the world knows. But the one is the love which demands luxury and pomp—it dispenses with glory, but not with magnificence—it lies

“In a pavilion—cloth of gold—of tissue
O'er picturing that Venus, where we see
The fancy outwork Nature.”

Take away the majesty from that love, and it sinks into the gross passion of a hoary dotard and an old coquette. But everything about the love of Juliet is young; pure even in its passion; it does not lose worlds, but it can dispense with the world itself; it asks no purple canopies, no regal feasts—its wine is rich enough without dissolving pearls in its sparkling freshness—it is precisely that which belongs to the beautiful inexperience of the passionate girl—it is the incarnation of passion, solely because it is the incarnation of youth. And there, in that barn belonging to the convent of the Franciscans—the very convent of the good old friar of the tale—no roof above, the damp mould below, the broken, oblong sepulchre itself half-filled with water, is the tomb of the being made familiar to us by genius—as if she had really moved and lived before us—as if we had gazed upon her in the revel, and listened to her voice from the moonlit balcony. Nothing can equal the sadness and gloom of the spot. On the walls yet remain two old and faded frescoes on the religious subjects

favoured by Italian art—morning and night the dews fall through the roofless hovel, and the melancholy stars gleam on the tomb whence the very dust is gone. It has not even the grandeur of desolation—it is no splendid sepulchre—no cathedral aisle, no high-arched roof impressing you with awe. A heap of fagots piled carelessly at one end of the out-house proves the little veneration in which the place is held ;—the spot is desecrated—the old tomb, with its pillow of stone, is but a broken cistern to the eyes of the brethren of the convent—the character of the place is drear, unsanctifying, slovenly discomfort. Beautiful daughter of the Capulet! none care for thee, thy love or thy memories, save the stranger from the far isle whom a Northern minstrel hath taught to weep for thee! It is this peculiar dreariness, this want of harmony between the spot and the associations, which make the scene so impressive. The eager, tender, ardent Juliet—every thought a passion—the very Hebe of Romance—never fated to be old—and this damp, unregarded hovel, strewn with vile lumber or profaned to all uses. What a contrast! what a moral of human affections! Had it been a green spot in some quiet valley, the tomb would have impressed us with sweet not sorrowful associations. We should have felt the soft steps of the appropriate spirit of the place, and dreamed back the dreams of poetry as at Arqua or in the grotto of Egeria. But there is no poetry here!—all is stern and real: the loveliest vision of Shakspeare surrounded by the hardest scenes of Crabbe. And afar in the city rise the gorgeous tombs of the Scaligers—the family of that Duke of Verona, who is but a pageant, a thing of foil and glitter, in the machinery of that enchanting tale ;—ten thousand florins of gold had one of these haughty princes consumed in order to eclipse, in his own, the magnificence of the tombs of his predecessors. Fretted and arched in all the elaborate tracery of the fourteenth century, those feudal tombs make yet the pride and boast of Verona ; and to Juliet, worth to the place all the dukes who ever strutted their hour upon the stage, this grey stone, and this mouldering barn! It is as if to avenge the slight upon her beautiful memory that we yawn as we gaze upon the tombs of power, and feel so deep a sympathy with this poor monument of love.

The old woman that showed the place had something in

her of the picturesque—aged, and wrinkled, and hideous, with her hard hand impatiently stretched out for the petty coin which was to pay for admission to the spot. She suited well with all the rest. She increased the pathos that belongs to the deserted sanctuary. How little could she feel that nothing in Verona was so precious to the “Zingaro” as this miserable hovel! And if it should not be Juliet’s tomb after all!—Out, sceptic!—the tradition goes far back—the dull Veronese themselves do not question it! Why should we? We all bear about us the prototype of that scene. That which made the passion and the glory of our youth—the Juliet of the heart—when once it has died and left us, lies not its tomb within us forgotten and unregarded!—surrounded by the lumber of base cares—polluted by strange and indifferent passions—by the wishes and desires of more vulgar life;—unheeded—unremembered—the sole monument which sanctifies the rude and commonplace abode in which it moulders silently away!

THE NEW PHÆDO ;

OR, CONVERSATIONS ON THINGS HUMAN AND DIVINE, WITH
ONE CONDEMNED.

“Τί οὖν δὴ ἔστιν ἅττα εἶπεν ὁ ἀνὴρ πρὸ τοῦ θανάτου ; καὶ πῶς ἐτελεύτα ;
ἡδέως γὰρ ἂν ἀκούσαιμι.” [What then did he say before his death ? and
how did he die ? for I should be glad to hear.]—PLATO : *Phæd.* I.

I HAVE always loved the old form of dialogue ; not, indeed, so much for investigating truth, as for speaking of truths after an easy yet not uncritical or hasty fashion. More familiar than the Essay, more impressed with the attraction of individual character, the Dialogue has also the illustrious examples of old—to associate the class to which it belongs with no commonplace or ignoble recollections. It may perhaps be still possible to give to the lighter and less severe philosophy a form of expression at once dramatic and unpedantic. I have held of late some conversations, that do not seem to me altogether uninteresting, with a man whom I have long considered of a singular and original character. I have obtained his permission to make these conversations public. They are necessarily of a desultory nature—they embrace a variety of topics—they are marked and individualised only by that poetical and half-fantastic philosophy which belongs to my friend, and that melancholy colouring which befits a picture that has Death in the back-ground. If in their diction they should appear now too florid—now too careless—I can only say that they faithfully represent the tone of conversation that in excited moments is the characteristic of the principal speaker.—Would that, while I detail the inanimate words, I could convey to the reader the aspect, the expression, the smile, the accents low and musical, that lent their meaning all its charm. As it is, they would remain altogether untold,

were it not for my friend's conviction that his end draws near, and did I not see sufficient in his appearance to forbid the hope that he can linger many months beyond the present date. To his mind, whatever be its capacities, its cultivation, its aspirings, all matured and solid offspring is forbidden. These fugitive tokens of all he acquired, or thought, or felt, are, if we read aright human probabilities, the sole testimony that he will leave behind him; not a monument,—but at least a few leaves scattered upon his grave. I feel a pain in writing the above words, but will he?—No! or he has wronged himself. He looks from the little inn of his mortality, and anticipates the long summer journey before him; he repines not to-day that he must depart to-morrow.

On Saturday last, November 13th, I rode to L——'s habitation, which is some miles from my own home. The day was cold, but I found him with the windows of his room open, and feeding an old favourite in the shape of a squirrel, that had formerly been a tame companion. L——, on arriving at his present abode, had released it; but it came from the little copse in front of the windows every day to see its former master, and to receive some proof of remembrance from his good-natured hospitality.

CONVERSATION THE FIRST.

The Universality of Evil in the World—Is no less visible in the lesser Creatures than in Man—The Hope of Perfectibility—Change in the Temperament of L———What is pleasant when recalled is often wearisome when acted—Love—The Influence of Custom on the Connubial State—Society exacts in proportion as it is prepared to admire—L——'s Sadness—Distinctions between Wit and Humour—Love of Conversational Argument less in vogue than formerly—Our Inability to conceive the Nature of our Happiness hereafter—Anecdote of Fuseli—Plato—Quotation from Lord Herbert of Cherbury—The Sentiment that our Faculties cannot content themselves in this Life visible in the Works of Genius—This Sentiment more common in the English than the Continental Poets—The Spirituality of Goethe's Genius—Observation in the "Wilhelm Meister"—The Painter Blake and his Illustration of the "Night Thoughts"—Young—His Gloom spreads only over this World, without darkening the next.

"AFTER all," said L——, "though the short and simple annals of the poor are often miserable enough, no peasant lives so wretched a life as the less noble animals, whom we are sometimes tempted to believe more physically happy. Observe how uneasily this poor squirrel looks around him.

P

He is subject to perpetual terror from a large Angola cat, which my housekeeper chooses to retain in our domestic service, and which has twice very nearly devoured my nervous little hermit. In how large a proportion of creatures is existence composed of one ruling passion—the most agonising of all sensations—*Fear*! No; human life is but a Rembrandt kind of picture at the best; yet we have no cause to think there are brighter colours in the brute world. Fish are devoured by intestinal worms; birds are subject to continual diseases, some of a very torturing nature. Look at yon ant-hill, what a melancholy mockery of our kind—what eternal wars between one hill and another—what wrong—what violence! You know the red ants invade the camps of the black, and bear off the young of these little negroes to be slaves to their victors. When I see throughout all nature the same miseries, the same evil passions, whose effects are crime with us, but whose cause is instinct with the brutes, I confess there are moments when I feel a sort of despondence of our ultimate doom in this world: when I am almost inclined to surrender the noblest earthly hope that man ever formed, and which is solely the offspring of modern times—the hope of human perfectibility.

A. You have inclined, then, to the eloquent madness of Condorcet and De Staël! You have believed, then, in spite of the countless ages before us, in which the great successions of human kind are recorded by the Persian epitome of Universal History, “They were born, they were wretched, they died!”—you have believed, despite so long, so uniform, so mournful an experience—despite, too, our physical conformation, which, even in the healthiest and the strongest, subjects the body to so many afflictions, and therefore the temper to so many infirmities—you have believed that we yet may belie the past, cast off the slough of crimes, and, gliding into the full light of knowledge, become as angels in the sight of God—you have believed, in a word, that even on this earth, by maturing in wisdom we may ripen to perfection.

L. What else does the age we live in betoken? Look around; not an inanimate object, not a block of wood, not a bolt of iron,

“But doth suffer an *earth*-change
Into something rich and strange.”

Wherever a man applies his intellect, behold how he triumphs. What marvellous improvements in every art, every ornament, every luxury of life! Why not these improvements ultimately in life itself? Are we "the very fiend's Archmock," that we can reform every thing, save that which will alone enable us to *enjoy* our victory—the *human heart*? In vain we grasp all things without, if we have no command over the things within. No! Institutions are mellowing into a brighter form; with Institutions the Character will expand: it will swell from the weak bonds of our foibles and our vices; and if we are fated never to become perfect, we shall advance at least, and eternally, *towards* perfectibility. The world hath had two Saviours—one divine, and one human; the first was the founder of our religion, the second the propagator of our knowledge. The second, and I utter nothing profane, it ministers to the first—the second is the might of the PRESS. By that, the Father of all safe revolutions, the Author of all permanent reforms—by that, man will effect what the first ordained—the reign of peace, and the circulation of love among the great herd of man.

A. Our conversation has fallen on a topic graver than usual; but these times give, as it were, a solemn and prophetic tone to all men who *think*, and are not yet summoned to act. I feel as if I stood behind a veil stretched across another and an unknown world, and waited in expectation, and yet in awe, the hand that was to tear it away.

L. Ay, I envy you at times (but not always) the long and bright career that, in these days, is opened to a wise man's ambition; you may live to tread it; you have activity and ardour; and, whether you fall or rise, the step forward you will at least adventure. But I am a bird chained, and the moment *my* chain is broken my course is heavenward. After all, what preacher of human vanities is like the Flesh, which is yet their author? Two years ago my limbs were firm, my blood buoyant—how boundless was my ambition! Now my constitution is gone—and so perish my desires of glory. You and I, A——, entered the world together.

A. Yes,—yet with what different tempers!

L. True: you were less versatile, more reserved, more solidly ambitious, than myself; your tone of mind was

more solemn, mine more eager : life has changed our dispositions, because it has altered our frames. That was a merry year, our first of liberty and pleasure !—but when the sparkle leaves the cup, how flat is the draught ! What makes us so wise as our follies ?—the intrigues, the amours, that degrade us while enacted, enlighten us when they are passed away. We have been led, as it were, by the pursuit of a glittering insect to the summit of a mountain, and we see the Land of Life stretched below.

A. Yet shall we not exclaim, with Boileau,

“Souvent de tous nos maux la raison est le pire ?” *

Those delusions were pleasant——

L. To remember—they were wearisome and unprofitable while we actually indulged them ; a man plays the game of women with manifold disadvantages if he bring any heart to the contest : if he discover, with Marmontel's Alcibiades, that he has not been really loved, how deeply is he wounded—if he *have* been really loved, how bitterly may he repent ! Society is at war with all love except the connubial ; and that love, how soon does it pass into the atmosphere of commonplace ! It loses its charm with me the moment I remark, which I always do remark, that though the good pair may be very kind to each other on the whole, they have sacrificed respect to that most cruel of deceivers, Custom. They have some little gnawing jest at each other ; they have found out every mutual weakness ; and, what is worse, they have found out the sting to it. “The breath of the south can shake the little rings of the vine,” and the picture preserves no more “the colours and the beauties of kindness.” † The only interesting and, if I may contradict Rochefoucault, the only *delicious* marriages, are those in which the husband is wise enough to see very little of his wife ; the absence in the morning prevents *ennui* in the evening, and frequent separations conquer the evil charm of Custom.

A. Thus it is that an ardent imagination so often unfits us for the real enjoyments of domestic attachment—custom blunts the imagination more than it wearies the temper.

* [Often of all our evils, reason is the worst.]

† Jeremy Taylor, in that most divine sermon on the “Marriage Ring,” which contains more knowledge of the mysteries of love, and the true philters wherewith it is preserved, than can be found in all that the love-poets ever wrote.

But you had some bright moments in your first year of the world—I remember you the admired of all, the admirer of how many?

L. I was young, rich, well-born; and I had an elastic and gay temper. See all my claims to notice! But the instant my high spirits forsook me, society cooled. It is not quite true that adventitious claims alone, unless of the highest order, give one a permanent place in the charmed circle of the Armidas of our age. Society is a feast where every man must contribute his quota, and when our seat at the table is noted as the home of silence and gloom, we are soon left to enjoy our meditations alone. Besides, the secret of fashion is to surprise, and never to disappoint. If you have no reputation for wit, you may succeed without it; if you have, people do not forgive you for falling below their expectations: they attribute your silence to your disdain; they see the lion, and are contented to go away; to abuse him, and to see him no more.

A. I have often been surprised to remark you so contented with silence, whom I have known, in some circles so—shall I say?—brilliant.

L. There is no mystery in my content, it is in spite of myself. I have always preached up the *morality* of being gay; if I do not practise it, it is because I cannot. About two years ago my spirits suddenly fled me. In vain I endeavoured to rally them: in vain to force myself into the world—in vain “I heard music, and wooed the smile of women;” a sort of stupor seized and possessed me—I have never in mixed society been able, since that time, to shake it off: since then, too, I have slowly wasted away without any visible disease, and I am now literally dying of no disorder but the inability to live.

Speaking of wit, I met at a dinner, a few months ago, M—— and W—— I——, and two or three other persons, eminent, and deservedly, both for wit and for humour. One of them, I think M——, said, somebody or other had wit but no humour; it was asserted, on the other hand, that the person spoken of had humour but no wit. I asked the disputants to define the difference between wit and humour, and of course they were struck dumb.

A. No rare instance of the essence of dispute, which consists in making every one allow what nobody understands.

L. Perhaps so; but really, to understand a thing thoroughly, is less necessary than you or I think for. Each of the disputants knew very well what he meant, but he could not explain; the difference was clear enough to serve his own mind as a guide, but not being analysed, it was not clear enough to be of use to others. Wit is the philosopher's quality, by the way—humour the poet's; the nature of wit relates to things, humour to persons. Wit utters brilliant truths, humour delicate deductions from the knowledge of *individual* character: Rochefoucault is witty, the Vicar of Wakefield is the model of humour.

A. While you define I could dispute your definition—shall I?

L. Not in conversation, we shall end in talking nonsense; metaphysical disputes on paper are very well, but spoken disputes are only good in special pleading.

A. When we were at Cambridge together, do you remember how the young pedants of our time were wont to consider that all intellect consisted in puzzling or setting down each other?

L. Ay, they thought us very poor souls, I fancy, for being early wise, and ridiculing what they thought so fine: but that love of conversational argument is less the mode now than in our grandfathers' time; then it made a celebrity. You see the intellectual Nestors of that time still very anxious to engage you. G—— is quite offended with me for refusing to argue Helvetius's system with him in a close carriage.

A. The true spirit of conversation consists in building on another man's observation, not overturning it; thus, the wit says, "*à propos* of your remark;" and the disagreeable man exclaims, "I cannot agree with you."

Here our discourse was interrupted by the entrance of a female relation of L——'s; she came with his medicine, for though he considers himself beyond human aid, he does not affect to despise the more sanguine hopes of those attached to him. "Let them think," said he, "that they have done all they could for me: my boat is on the water, it is true, but it would be ill-natured if I did not loiter a little on the strand. It seems to me a singular thing that, among persons about to die, we note so little of that anxious, intense, restless curiosity to know what will await them beyond the grave, which, with me, is powerful

enough to conquer regret. Even those the most resigned to God, and the most assured of Revelation, know not, nor can dream, of the *nature* of the life, of the happiness, prepared for them. They know not *how* the senses are to be refined and sublimated into the faculties of a Spirit; they know not *how* they shall live, and move, and have their being; they know not whom they shall see, or what they shall hear; they know not the colour, the capacity of the glories with which they are to be brought face to face. Among the many mansions, which is to be theirs? All this, the matter of grand and of no irreverent conjecture; all this, it seems to me, so natural to revolve—all this I revolve so often, that the conjecture incorporates itself into a passion, and I am impatient to pass the Ebon Gate, and be lord of the Eternal Secret. Thus, as I approach nearer to death, Nature, and the Face of Things, assume a more solemn and august aspect. I look upon the leaves, and the grass, and the water, with a sentiment that is scarcely mournful; and yet I know not what else it may be called, for it is deep, grave, and passionate, though scarcely sad. I desire, as I look on those, the ornaments and children of earth, to know, whether, indeed, such things I shall see no more—whether they have no likeness, no archetype in the world in which my future home is to be cast; or whether they *have* their images above, only wrought in a more wondrous and delightful mould. Whether, in the strange land that knoweth neither season nor labour, there will not be, among all its glories, something familiar. Whether the heart will not recognise somewhat that it has known, somewhat of “the blessed household tones,” somewhat of that which the clay loved and the spirit is reluctant to disavow. Besides, to one who, like us, has made a thirst and a first love of knowledge, what intenseness, as well as divinity, is there in that peculiar curiosity which relates to the extent of the knowledge we are to acquire! What, after all, is Heaven but a transition, from dim guesses and blind struggling with a mysterious and adverse fate, to the fulness of all wisdom—from ignorance, in a word, to knowledge: but knowledge of what order? Thus, even books have something weird and mystic in their speculations, which, some years ago, my spirit was too encumbered with its frame to recognise: for what of those speculations shall be true—what false? How far has our wisdom gone to-

ward the arcanum of a true morality ! how near has some daring and erratic reason approached to the secret of circulating happiness round the world ! Shall He, whom we now condemn as a visionary, be discovered to have been the inspired prophet of our blinded and deafened race ; and shall He, whom we now honour as the lofty saint, or the profound teacher, be levelled to the propagator and sanctifier of narrow prejudices ; the reasoner in a little angle of the great and scarce-discovered universe of Truth ; the moral Chinese, supposing that his Empire fills the map of the world, and placing under an interdict the improvements of a nobler enlightenment ?

A. But to those—and how many are there?—who doubt of the future world itself, this solace of conjecture must be but a very languid and chilled exertion of the mind.

L. I grant it. I am not referring to the herd, whether of one faith or another, or of none. I have often pleased myself with recalling an anecdote of Fuseli—a wonderful man, whose capacities in this world were only a tithe part developed ; in everything of his, in his writings as well as his paintings, you see the mighty intellect struggling forth with labour and pain, and with only a partial success ; and feeling this himself — feeling this contest between the glorious design and the crippled power—I can readily penetrate into his meaning in the reply I am about to repeat. Some coxcomb said to him, “Do you really believe, Mr. Fuseli, that I have a soul ?” — “I don’t know, sir,” said Fuseli, “whether *you* have a soul or no ; but, by God ! I know that *I* have.” And really, were it not for the glorious and all-circling compassion expressed by our faith, it would be a little difficult to imagine that the soul, that title-deed to immortality, were equal in all—equal in the dull, unawakened clod of flesh which performs the offices that preserve itself, and no more, and in the bright and winged natures with which we sometimes exalt our own, and which seem to have nothing human about them but the garments (to use the Athenian’s* familiar metaphor) that they wear away. You will smile at my pedantry, but one of the greatest pleasures I anticipate in arriving *at home*—as the Moravian sectarians so endearingly call Heaven—is to see Plato, and learn if he had ever rested, as he himself imagined, and I am willing to believe, in a brighter

* Socrates.

world before he descended to this. So bewitching is the study of that divine and most Christian genius, that I have often felt a sort of jealous envy of those commentators who have devoted years to the contemplation of his mystical and unearthly philosophy. My ambition—had I enjoyed health—would never have suffered me to have become so dreaming a watcher over the lamp in another's tomb: but my imagination would have placed me in an ideal position, that my restlessness forbade me in reality. This activity of habit, yet love of literary indolence—this planning of schemes and conquests in learning, from which one smile from enterprise would decoy me, when scarce begun, made C—— call me, not unaptly, “the most extraordinary reader he ever knew—in theory.” I see, by-the-by, that you are leaning upon the “Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury”—will you open the page in which I have set a mark? We were speaking of the soul, and that page expresses a very beautiful and eloquent, if not very deep sentiment, on the subject. Will you read it?

A. Certainly,—“As in my mother's womb,* that formatrix which formed my eyes, ears, and other senses, did not intend them for that dark and noisome place—but, as being conscious of a better life, made them as fitting organs to apprehend and perceive those things which occur in this world,—so I believe, since my coming into this world, my soul hath formed or produced certain faculties, which are almost as useless for this life as the above-named senses were for the mother's womb: and these faculties are Hope, Faith, Love, and Joy, since they never rest or fix on any transitory or perishing object in this world—as extending themselves to something farther than can be here given, and, indeed, acquiescing only in the perfect Eternal and Infinite.”

L. It is fine—is it not?

A. Yes. It is a proof that the writer *has* felt that vague something which carries us beyond the world. To discover the evidence of that feeling is one of my first tasks in studying a great author. How solemnly it burns through Shakspeare! with what a mournful and austere grandeur it thrills through the yet diviner Milton! how peculiarly it

* I am not sure that I retail this passage *verbatim*. I committed it to memory, and (writing in the country) I cannot now obtain the book by which to collate my recollection.

has stamped itself in the pages of our later poets ! But this feeling is rarely perceptible in any of the Continental poets ; except, perhaps, the Germans.

L. Ay ; Goethe has it. To me there is something very mysterious and spiritual about Goethe's genius—even that homely and plain sense with which, in common with all master-minds, he so often instructs us, and which is especially evident in his "Memoirs," is the more effective from some delicate and subtle beauty of sentiment with which it is always certain to be found in juxtaposition.

A. I remember a very delicate observation of his in "Wilhelm Meister," a book which had a very marked influence upon my own mind ; and though the observation may seem commonplace, it is one of a nature very peculiar to Goethe : "When," he remarks, "we have despatched a letter to a friend which does not find him, but is brought back to us, what a singular emotion is produced by breaking open our own seal, and conversing with our altered self as with a third person."

L. There is something ghostlike in the conference, something like a commune with one's wraith.

* * * *

A. Of all enthusiasts, the painter Blake seems to have been the most remarkable. With what a hearty faith he believed in his faculty of seeing spirits and conversing with the dead ! And what a delightful vein of madness it was !—with what exquisite verses it inspired him !

L. And what engravings ! I saw, a few days ago, a copy of the "Night Thoughts," which he had illustrated in a manner at once so grotesque, so sublime—now by so literal an interpretation, now by so vague and disconnected a train of invention, that the whole makes one of the most astonishing and curious productions which ever balanced between the conception of genius and the chimeras of insanity. I remember two or three of his illustrations, but they are not the most remarkable. To these two fine lines—

" 'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past Hours,
And ask them what report they bore to heaven ; "

he has given the illustration of one sitting, and with an earnest countenance conversing with a small, shadowy

shape at his knee, while other shapes, of a similar form and aspect, are seen gliding heavenward, each with a scroll in its hands. The effect is very solemn. Again, the line—

“Till death, that mighty hunter, carths them all,”

is bodied forth by a grim savage with a huge spear, cheering on fiendish and ghastly hounds, one of which has just torn down, and is griping by the throat, an unfortunate fugitive: the face of the hound is unutterably deathlike.

The verse—

“ We censure Nature for a span too short,”

obtains an illustration, literal to ridicule.—A bearded man of gigantic stature is spanning an infant with his finger and thumb. Scarcely less literal, but more impressive, is the engraving of the following:—

“ When Sense runs savage, broke from Reason's chain,
And sings false peace till smother'd by the pall ! ”

You perceive a young female savage, with long locks, wandering alone, and exulting—while above, two bodiless hands extend a mighty pall, that appears about to fall upon the unconscious rejoicer.

A. Young was fortunate to have his very metaphors illustrated and made corporeal.

L. What wonderful metaphors they are; sometimes trite, familiar, commonplace—sometimes exaggerated and fantastic, but often how ineffably sublime! Milton himself has not surpassed them. But Young is not done justice to, popular as he is. He has never yet had a critic to display and make current his most peculiar and emphatic beauties. He is, of all poets, the one to be studied by a man who is about to break the golden chains that bind him to the world—his gloom, then, does not appal or deject: for it is a gloom that settles on the earth we are about to leave, and casts not a single shadow over the heaven which it contrasts—the dark river of his solemn genius sweeps the thoughts onward to Eternity. We have no desire even to look behind; the ideas he awakens are, in his own words, “the pioneers of Death;” they make the road broad and clear; they bear down those “arrests and barriers,” the Affections; the goal, starred and luminous with glory, is placed full before us, every thing else,

with which he girds our path, afflicts and saddens. We recoil, we shudder at life; and, as children who in tears and agony at some past peril bound forward to their mother's knee, we hasten, as our comfort and our parent, to the bosom of Death.

CONVERSATION THE SECOND.

L——'s Increase of Illness—Remarks on a Passage in Bacon—Advantages in the Belief of Immortality—An Idea in the Last Conversation followed out—A Characteristic of the Sublime—Feelings in one Dying at the Restlessness of Life around.

WHEN I called on L—— the third day after the conversation I have attempted to record, though with the imperfect success that must always attend the endeavour to retail dialogue on paper, I found him stretched on his sofa, and evidently much weaker than when I had last seen him. He had suffered the whole night from violent spasms in the chest, and, though now free from pain, was labouring under the exhaustion which follows it. But nothing could wholly conquer in him a certain high-wrought, rather than cheerful, elasticity of mind; and in illness it was more remarkable than in health: for I know not how it was, but in illness his thoughts seemed to stand forth more prominent, to grow more transparent, than they were wont in the ordinary state of the body. He had also of late, until his present malady, fallen into an habitual silence, from which only at moments he could be aroused. Perhaps now, however, when all his contemplations were bounded to a goal apparently near at hand, and were tinged with the grave (though in him not gloomy) colours common to the thoughts of death—that secret yearning for sympathy—that *desire to communicate*—inherent in man, became the stronger for the short date that seemed allowed for its indulgence. Wishes long hoarded, reflections often and deeply revolved, finding themselves cut off from the distant objects which they had travailed to acquire, seemed wisely to lay down their burthen, and arrest their course upon a journey they were never destined to complete. "I have been reading," said L—— (after we had conversed for some minutes about himself), "that divine work on

'The Advancement of Learning.' What English writer (unless it be Milton in his prose works) ever lifted us from this low earth like Bacon? How shrink before his lofty sentences all the meagre consolation and trite commonplace of lecturers and preachers!—it is, as he has beautifully expressed it, upon no '*waxen wings*,' that he urges the mind through the great courses of heaven. He makes us feel less earthly in our desires, by making us imagine ourselves *wiser*,—the love of a divine knowledge inspires and exalts us. And so nobly has he forced even our ignorance to contribute towards enlarging the soul—towards increasing our longings after immortality—that he never leaves us, like other philosophers, with a sense of self-littleness and dissatisfaction. With the same hand that limits our progress on earth, he points to the illimitable glories of heaven. Mark how he has done this in the passage I will read to you. As he proceeds in his sublime vindication of Knowledge, 'from the discredits and disgraces it hath received all from ignorance; but ignorance, severally acquired, appearing sometimes in the zeal and jealousy of divines: sometimes in the severity and arrogance of politicians; sometimes in the errors and imperfections of learned men themselves;—proceeding, I say, in this august and majestic defence, he states the legitimate limits of knowledge, as follows:—'first, that we do not so place our felicity in knowledge as to forget our mortality; secondly, that we make application of our knowledge, to give ourselves repose and contentment, not distaste or repining; thirdly, that we do not presume, by the contemplation of Nature, to attain to the mysteries of God.' After speaking of the two first limits, he comes as follows to the last:—'And for the third point, it deserveth to be a little stood upon, and not to be lightly passed over; for if any man shall think, by view and inquiry into these sensible and material things, to attain that light whereby he may reveal unto himself the nature or will of God, then indeed is he spoiled by vain philosophy; for the contemplation of God's creatures and works produceth (*having regard to the works and creatures themselves*) knowledge; but (*having regard to God*) no perfect knowledge, but wonder, which is broken knowledge. And therefore (note how wonderfully this image is translated, and how beautifully applied,) it was most aptly said by one of Plato's school, 'that the sense of man carrieth a resemblance

with the sun, which, as we see, openeth and revealeth all the terrestrial globe; but then again it obscureth the stars and celestial globe: so doth the sense discover natural things, but it darkeneth and shutteth up divine." Tell me now, and speak frankly, not misled by the antique splendour of the language alone,—tell me whether you do not feel, in the above passages, not humbled by your ignorance, but transported and raised by its very conviction; for, by leaving the mysteries of heaven, and heaven *alone*, unpenetrated by our knowledge, what do we, in reality, but direct the secret and reverent desires of our hearts to that immortal life which shall put the crown upon the great ambition of knowledge, and reveal those mysteries which are shut out from us in this narrow being? Here then there is nothing to lower our imagination,—nothing to chill us in the ardour of our best aspirings,—nothing to disgust us with the bounds of knowledge, or make us recoil upon ourselves with the sense of vanity, of emptiness, of desolation. It is this—the peculiar prerogative of the conviction of our inborn immortality, to take away from us that bitterness at the checks and arrests of knowledge, of which the wise of all ages have complained,—to give wings to our thoughts at the very moment they are stopped on their earthly course,—to ennoble us from ourselves at the moment when self languishes and droops: it is this prerogative, I say, which has always seemed to me the greatest advantage which a thinking man, who believes in our immortality, has over one who does not. And though, fortunately for mankind, and for all real virtue, the time is rapidly passing away in which we may presume to measure the conduct of others by the proportion in which their opinions resemble our own, yet it must be confessed that he who claims this prerogative has a wonderful advantage over him who rejects it—in the acquisition of noble and unworldly thoughts—in the stimulus to wisdom, and the exalting of the affections, the visions, and the desires! It seems to me as if not only the Form, but the SOUL of Man was made "to walk erect, and to look upon the stars."

A.—(After some pause.)—Whether or not that it arises from this sentiment, common (however secretly nursed) to the generality of men; this sentiment, that the sublimest sources of emotion and of wisdom remain as yet unknown, there is one very peculiar characteristic in all genius of the

highest order; viz. even its loftiest attempts impress us with the feeling, that a vague but glorious "SOMETHING" inspired or exalted the attempt, *and yet remains unexpressed*. The effect is like that of the spire, which, by insensibly tapering into heaven, owes its pathos and its sublimity to the secret thoughts with which that heaven is associated.

L. Yes; and this, which, you say justly, is the characteristic of the loftiest order of genius, is that token and test of sublimity so especially insisted upon by the ancients, who, perhaps, in consequence of the great scope left by their religion to inquiry, were more impressed with the sentiment we speak of, than is common to the homelier sense, and the satisfied and quiet contemplations, of the moderns. The old scholastic critic* has made it a characteristic of the true sublime, to leave behind it something more to be contemplated than is expressed; and again, Pliny, speaking of painters, observes, I think of Timanthes, "that in his works something more† than was painted was understood, and that when his art was at the highest, the genius was beyond the art." It is this which especially designates the poetry of "Young."

* * * * *

Here we talked for some time on the aspect of affairs, the administration, the disturbances in the country.‡

L. How strangely falls the sound of tumult on the ear of one who is about to die—how strange doth it seem to behold life so busy and death so near! It is this contrast which, I own, gives me the most mournful—though vague and reluctantly acknowledged—feelings that I experience; it gives me a dejection, an envy; my higher and more soaring thoughts desert me, I become sensible only of my weakness, of my want of use, in this world where all are buckling to their armour, and awaiting an excitation, an enterprise, and a danger. I remember all my old ambition—my former hopes—my energies—my anticipations; I see the great tides of action sweep over me, not even wrestling with death, but feeling it gather and darken upon me, unable to stir or to resist. I could compare myself to some

* Longin. sect. 7.

† "In unius hujus operibus intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur; et cum sit ars summa, ingenium tamen ultra artem est."

‡ Written in 1830, before the passing of the Reform-bill.

neglected fountain in a ruined city : amidst the crumbling palaces of Hope, which have fallen around me, the waters of life ooze away in silence and desolation.

L——'s voice faltered a little as he spoke, and his dog, whether, as I often think, there is in that animal an instinct which lets him know by a look, by a tone of voice, when the object of his wonderful fidelity and affection is sad at heart—his dog, an old pointer, that he had cherished for many years, and was no less his companion in the closet than it had been in the chase, came up to him and licked his hand. I own this little incident affected me, and the tears rushed into my eyes. But I was yet more softened when I saw L——'s tears were falling fast over the honest countenance of the dog ; I knew well what was passing in his mind—no womanly weakness—no repining at death ; of all men he had suffered most, and felt most keenly, the neglect and perfidy of friends ; and, at that moment, he was contrasting a thousand bitter remembrances with the simple affection of that humble companion. I never saw L—— *weep* before, though I have seen him in trying afflictions, and though his emotions are so easily excited that he never utters a noble thought, or reads a touching sentiment in poetry, but you may perceive a certain moisture in his eyes, and a quiver on his lips.

Our conversation drooped after this, and though I stayed with him for some hours longer, I do not remember any thing else that day worth repeating.

CONVERSATION THE THIRD.

The French Worldly Philosophers—The First Step in Wisdom is to learn to *Think*, no matter how—Thought corrects itself—Brilliant Writers *less* dangerous than dull ones—Why—Faults of certain Philosophers—L——, the respectful Affection he excites—The Heart turns from Death—Passage in Bolingbroke—Private Life does not afford a Vent for all our Susceptibilities—A Touching Thought in Milton's Latin Poems.

I CALLED on L—— the next day ; K——, one of the few persons he admits, was with him ; they were talking on those writers who have directed their philosophy towards matters of the world ; who have reduced wisdom into epigrams, and given the Goddess of the Grove and the Portico the dress of a lady of fashion. "Never, perhaps,"

said K——, “did Virtue, despite the assertion of Plato, that we had only to behold in order to adore her, attract so many disciples to wisdom as Wit has done. How many of us have been first incited to reason, have first learned to think, to draw conclusions, to extract a moral from the follies of life, by some dazzling aphorism from Rochefoucault or La Bruyère! Point, like rhyme, seizes at once the memory and the imagination: for my own part, I own frankly that I should never have known what it was to reflect—I should never have written on Political Economy—I should never have penetrated into the character of my rogue of a guardian, and saved my fortune by a timely act of prudence—I should never have chosen so good a wife—nay, I should never have been L——’s friend, if I had not, one wet day at Versailles, stumbled upon Rochefoucault’s *Maxims*; from that moment *I thought*, and I thought very erroneously and very superficially for some time, but the habit of thinking, by degrees, cures the faults of its novitateness; and I often bless Rochefoucault as the means which redeemed me from a life of extravagance and debauchery, from the clutches of a rascal, and made me fond of rational pursuits and respectable society. Yet how little would Rochefoucault’s book seem, to the shallow declaimer on the heartlessness of its doctrines, calculated to produce so good an effect.

A. Yes, the faults of a brilliant writer are never dangerous on the long run, a thousand people read his work who would read no other: inquiry is directed to each of his doctrines, it is soon discovered what is true and what is false; the true become star-lights, and the false beacons. But your dull writer is little conned, little discussed. Debate, that great winnow of the corn from the chaff, is denied him; the student hears of him as an authority, reads him without a guide, imbibes his errors, and retails them as a proof of his learning. In a word, the dull writer does not attract to wisdom those indisposed to follow it: and to those who are disposed he bequeaths as good a chance of inheriting a blunder as a truth.

L. I will own to you very frankly that I have one objection to *beginning to think*, from the thoughts of these worldly inquirers. Notwithstanding Rochefoucault tells us himself, with so honest a gravity, that he had “*les sentimens beaux*,” and that he approved “*extrêmement les*

belles passions," his obvious tendency is not to ennoble; he represents the Tragi-comedy of the Great World, but he does not excite us to fill its grand parts; he tells us some of the real motives of men, but he does not tell us also the better motives with which they are entwined. This want of faith in the sublime is what I find, not to blame, but to lament in most of the authors who have very shrewdly, and with a felicitous and just penetration, unravelled the vices and errors of mankind. I find it in La Bruyère, in Rochefoucault, even in the more weak and tender Vauvenargues, whose merits have, I think, been so unduly extolled by Dugald Stewart; I find it in Swift, Fielding (admirable moralist as the latter indubitably is in all the lesser branches of morals), and among the ancients, who so remarkable for the same want as the sarcastic and inimitable Lucian? But let us not judge hastily; this want of nobleness, so to speak, is not *necessarily* the companion of shrewdness. But mark, where we find the noble and the shrewd united, we acknowledge at once a genius of the *very highest* order; we acknowledge a Shakspeare, a Tacitus, a Cervantes.

A. Another characteristic of the order of writers we refer to is this—they are too apt to disregard books, and to write from their own experience; now an experience backed upon some wide and comprehensive theory, is of incalculable value to Truth; but, where that theory is wanting, the experience makes us correct in minute points, but contracted, and therefore in error, on the whole; for error is but a view of *some* facts instead of a survey of *all*.

L. In a word, it is with philosophers as with politicians; the experience that guides the individuals must be no rule for the community. And here I remember a fine and just comparison of the Emperor Julian's: speaking of some one who derived knowledge from practice rather than principle, he compares him to an empiric who, by practice, may cure one or two diseases with which he is familiar; but, having no system or theory of art, must necessarily be ignorant of the innumerable complaints which have not fallen under his personal observation. Yet *now*, when a man ventures to speak of a comprehensive and scientific theory, in opposition to some narrow and cramped practice, *he* who in reality is the physician,—"*he* is exclaimed against as the quack."

Shortly after this part of our conversation, K—— went away, and we talked on some matters connected with L——'s private and household affairs. By degrees, while our commune grew more familiar and confidential, and while the shades of these long winter evenings gathered rapidly over us, as we sat alone by the fire, L—— spoke of some incidents in his early history; and I who had always felt a deep interest in even the smallest matter respecting him, and, despite our intimacy, was unacquainted with many particulars of his life, in which I fancied there must be something not unworthy recital, pressed him earnestly to give me a short and frank memoir of his actual and literary life. Indeed, I was anxious that some portion of the world should know as much as may now be known of one who is of no common clay, and who, though he has not numbered many years, and has passed some of those years in the dissipation and pleasure common to men of his birth and wealth, is now, at least, never mentioned by those who know him without a love bordering on idolatry, and an esteem more like the veneration we feel for some aged and celebrated philosopher, than the familiar attachment generally felt for those of our own years and of no public reputation.

"As to my early LIFE," said L——, smiling in answer to my urgent request, "I feel that it is but an echo of an echo. I do not refuse, however, to tell it you, such as it is; for it may give food to some observations from you more valuable than the events which excite them; and, as to some later epochs in my short career, it will comfort me, even while it wounds, to speak of them. Come to me, then, to-morrow, and I will recall in the meanwhile what may best merit repeating in the memoir you so inconsiderately ask for. But do not leave me yet, dear A——. Sit down again—let us draw nearer to the fire.—How many scenes have we witnessed in common—how many enterprises have we shared! Let us talk of these, and to-morrow shall come *my* solitary history: self, self, the eternal self—let us run away from it one day more. Could you but know how forcibly it appears to me, that as life wanes the affections warm; I have observed this in many instances of *early* death;—early, for in the decay by years the heart outlives all its ties. As the physical parts stiffen, so harden the moral. But in youth, when all the Affec-

tions are green within us, they will not willingly perish; they stretch forth their arms, as it were, from their ruined and falling prison-house—they yearn for expansion and release. ‘Is it,’ as that divine, though often sullied nature, at once the luminary and the beacon to English statesmen, has somewhere so touchingly asked, ‘is it that we grow more tender as the moment of our great separation approaches, or is it that they who are to live together in another state (for friendship exists not but for the good) begin to feel more strongly that divine sympathy which is to be the great bond of their future society?’”*

I could have answered this remark by an allusion to the change in the physical state; the relaxation of illness; the helplessness we feel when sick, and the sense of dependence, the desire to *lean somewhere*, that the debility of disease occasions. But I had no wish to chill the vein of reasoning to which L—— was inclined; and, after a little pause, he continued:—“For men who have ardent affections, there seems to me no medium between public life and dissatisfaction. In public life those affections find ample channel; they become benevolence, or patriotism, or the spirit of party; or, finally, attaching themselves to things, not persons, concentrate into ambition. But in private life, who, after the first enthusiasm of passion departs, who, possessed of a fervent and tender soul, is ever contented with the return it meets? A word, a glance, chills us; we ask for too keen a sympathy; we ourselves grow irritable that we find it not—the irritability offends; that is attributed to the temper which in reality is the weakness of the heart—accusation, dispute, coldness, succeed. We are flung back upon our own breasts, and so comes one good or one evil—we grow devout or we grow selfish. Denied vent among our fellows, the affections find a refuge in heaven; or they centre in a peevish and lonely contraction of heart, and self-love becomes literally, as the forgotten LEE has expressed it generally,

‘The axletree that darts through all the frame.’

This inevitable alternative is more especially to be noted in women; their affections are more acute than ours, so also is their disappointment. It is thus you see the credulous fondness of the devotee, or the fossilised heart of the

* Bolingbroke's *Letters to Swift*.

solitary crone, where, some thirty years back, you would have witnessed a soul running over with love for all things and the yearning to be loved again! Ah! why, why is it that no natures are made wholly alike? why is it that, of all blessings, we long the most for sympathy? and of all blessings it is that which none (or the exceptions are so scanty as not to avail) can say, after the experience of years and the trial of custom, that they have possessed. Milton, whose fate through life was disappointment—disappointment in his private ties and his public attachments—Milton, who has descended to an unthinking posterity as possessing a mind, however elevated, at least austere and harsh, has, in one of his early Latin poems, expressed this sentiment with a melancholy and soft pathos, not often found in the golden and Platonic richness of his youthful effusions in his own language—

‘Vix sibi quisque parem de millibus invenit unum;
Aut si fors dederit tandem non aspera votis
Illum inopina dies—qua non speraveris hora
Surripit—eternum linquens in sæcula damnum.’ *

“And who is there that has not said to himself, if possessed for a short time of one heart, entirely resembling and responding to his own,—who has not said to himself, daily and hourly, ‘*This cannot last!*’ Has he not felt a dim, unacknowledged dread of death? has he not, for the first time, shrunk from penetrating into the future? has he not become timorous and uneasy? is he not like the miser who journeys on the road begirt with a thousand perils, and who yet carries with him his all? Alas! there was a world of deep and true feeling in Byron’s expression, which, *critically* examined, is but a conceit. Love ‘hath, indeed, made its best interpreter a sigh.’”

* Thus prosaically translated:—

“Scarce one in thousands meets a kindred heart;
Or, if no harsh fate grant, at last, his dreams,
Swift comes the unforeboded Doom;—and lo,
Leaves to all time the everlasting loss!”

CONVERSATION THE FOURTH.

Containing L——'s History.

IN order to make allowance for much of the manner and the matter of L——'s conversation, I must beg the reader to observe how large the faculties of the imagination enter even into those channels of his mind from which (were the judgment thoroughly sound) all that is merely imaginative would be the most carefully banished. In L——'s character, indeed, whatever may be his talents, there was always *a string loose*; something morbid and vague, which even in perceiving, one could scarcely condemn: for it gave a tenderness to his views, and a glow of sentiment to his opinions, which made us love him better perhaps, than if his learning and genius had been accompanied with a severer justness of reasoning. For my own part, I, who despise rather than hate the world, and seldom see anything that seems to me, if rightly analysed, above contempt, am often carried away in spite of myself by his benevolence of opinion, and his softening and gentle order of philosophy. I often smile, as I listen to his wandering and Platonic conjectures on our earthly end and powers; but I am not sure that the smile is in disdain, even when his reasoning appears the most erratic.

I reminded L——, when I next saw him, of his promise, in our last conversation, to give me a sketch of his early history. I wished it to be the history of his mind as well as his adventures; in a word, a literary and moral, as well as actual narrative,—“A MEMOIR OF A STUDENT.” The moment in which I pressed the wish was favourable. He was in better spirits than usual, and free from pain; the evening was fine, and there was that quiet cheerfulness in the air which we sometimes find towards the close of one of those mild days that occasionally relieve the severity of an English winter.

THE CONFESSIONS OF AN AMBITIOUS STUDENT.

“You know,” said L——, commencing his story, “that I was born to the advantages of a good name and of more than a moderate opulence. The care of my education, for I

was an orphan, devolved upon my aunt, a maiden lady of some considerable acquirements and some very rare qualities of heart. Good old woman ! how well and how kindly I remember her, with her high cap and kerchief, the tortoise-shell spectacles, that could not conceal or injure the gentle expression of her eyes—eyes above which the brow never frowned ! How well, too, I remember the spelling-book, and the grammar, and (as I grew older) the odd volume of Plutarch's "Lives," that always lay, for *my* use and profit, on the old dark table beside her chair. And something better too, than spelling and grammar, ay, and even the life of Caius Marius, with that grand and terrible incident in the memoir, which Plutarch has so finely told, of how the intended murderer, entering the great Roman's hiding-chamber (as he lay there stricken by years and misfortune), saw through the dim and solemn twilight of the room the eye of the purposed victim fall like a warning light upon him, while a voice exclaimed, 'Darest thou, man, to slay Caius Marius ?' and how the stern Gaul, all awe-stricken and amazed, dropped the weapon, and fled from the chamber ; better, I say, even than spelling and grammar, and these fine legends of old, were certain homely precepts with which my good aunt was wont to diversify the lecture. Never to tell a lie, never to do a mean action, never to forsake a friend, and never to malign a foe ; these were the hereditary maxims of her race, and these she instilled into my mind as something, which, if I duly remembered, even the sin of forgetting how to spell words in eight syllables might be reasonably forgiven me.

"I was sent to school when I was somewhere about seven years old, and I remained at that school till I was twelve, and could construe Ovid's Epistles. I was then transplanted to another, better adapted to my increased years and wisdom. Thither I went with a notable resolution which greatly tended in its consequences to expand my future character. At my first academy I had been so often and so bitterly the victim of the exuberant ferocity of the elder boys, that I inly resolved, the moment I was of an age and stature to make any reasonable sort of defence, to anticipate the laws of honour, and never put up, in tranquil endurance, with a blow. When, therefore, I found myself at a new school, and at the age of twelve years, I saw (in my fancy) the epoch of resistance and

emancipation, which I had so long coveted. The third day of my arrival I was put to the proof; I was struck by a boy twice my size—I returned the blow—we fought, and I was conquered, but he never struck me again. That was an admirable rule of mine, if a boy has but animal hardihood; for one sound beating he escapes at least twenty lesser ones, with teasings and tormentings indefinitely numerous into the bargain. No boy likes to engage with a boy much less than himself, and rather than do so, he will refrain from the pleasure of tyrannising. We cannot, alas! in the present state of the world, learn too early the great wisdom of *Resistance*. I carried this rule, however, a little too far, as you shall hear. I had never been once touched, once even chidden by the master, till one day, when I was about fifteen, we had a desperate quarrel, ending in my expulsion. There was a certain usher in the school, a very pink and pattern of ushers. He was harsh to the lesser boys, but he had his favourites among them—fellows who always called him ‘Sir,’ and offered him oranges. To us of the higher school he was generally courteous, and it was a part of his policy to get himself invited home by one or the other of us during the holydays. For this purpose he winked at many of our transgressions, allowed us to give feasts on a half-holyday, and said nothing if he discovered a crib* in our possession. But, oh, to the mistress he was Meekness in a human shape. Such humble and sleek modesty never appeared before in a pair of drab inexpressibles and long gaiters. How he praised her pudding on a Sunday! how he extolled her youngest dunce on his entrance into Greek! how delicately he hinted at her still existent charms, when she wore her new silk gown at the parish church! and how subtly he alluded to her gentle influence over the rigid doctor! Somehow or other, between the usher and myself there was a feud; we looked on each other not lovingly; he said I had set the boys against him, and I accused him, in my own heart, of doing me no good service with the fat school-mistress. Things at length came to an open rupture. One evening, after school, the usher was indulging himself, with one of the higher boys, in the gentle recreation of a game at draughts. Now, after school, the school-room belonged solely and

* The cant word at schools for a literal translation of some classic author.

wholly to the boys; it was a wet afternoon, and some half-a-dozen of us entered into a game, not quite so quiet as that the usher was engaged in. Mr. — commanded silence; my companions were awed—not so myself; I insisted on our right to be as noisy as we would out of school. My eloquence convinced them, and we renewed the game. The usher again commanded silence; we affected not to hear him. He rose; he saw me in the act of rebellion.

“‘Mr. L——,’ cried he, ‘do you hear me, sir? Silence!’

“‘I beg your pardon, sir; but we have a right to the school-room after hours; especially of a wet evening.’

“‘Oh! very well, sir; very well; I shall report you to the doctor.’ So saying, the usher buttoned up his nether garment, which he had a curious custom of unbracing after school,—especially when engaged in draughts, and went forthwith to the master. I continued the game. The master entered. He was a tall, gaunt, lame man, very dark in hue, and of a stern Cameronian countenance, with a cast in his eye.

“‘How is this, Mr. L——?’ said he, walking up to me: ‘how dared you disobey Mr. ——’s order?’

- “‘Sir, his orders were against the custom of the school.’

“‘Custom, sir! and who gives custom to this school but myself? You are insolent, Mr. L——, and you don’t know what is due to your superiors.’

“‘Superiors!’ said I, with a look at the usher. The master thought I spoke of himself; his choler rose, and he gave me a box on the ear.

“All my blood was up in a moment; never yet, under that roof, had I received a blow unavenged on the spot. I had fought my way in the school, step by step, to the first ranks of pugilistic heroism. Those taller and more peaceable than myself hated me, but attacked not; these were now around me exulting in my mortification; I saw them *nudge* each other with insolent satisfaction; I saw their eyes gloat and their features grin. The master had never before struck a boy in my class. The insult was tenfold, because unparalleled. All these thoughts flashed across me. I gathered myself up, clenched my fist, and, with a sudden and almost unconscious effort, I returned, and in no gentle manner, the blow I had received. The pedagogue could have crushed me on the spot; he was a

remarkably powerful man. I honour him at this moment for his forbearance; at that moment I despised him for his cowardice. He looked thunderstruck, after he had received so audacious a proof of my contumacy; the blood left, and then gushed burningly back to his sallow cheek. 'It is well, sir,' said he, at length; 'follow me!' and he walked straight out of the school-room. I obeyed with a mechanical and dogged sullenness. He led the way into the house, which was detached from the school-room; entered a little dingy front parlour, in which only once before (the eve of my first appearance under his roof) had I ever set foot; motioned me also within the apartment; gave me one stern, contemptuous look; turned on his heel; left the room; locked the door, and I was alone. At night the maid-servants came in, and made up a bed on a little black horsehair sofa. There was I left to repose. The next morning came at last. My breakfast was brought me, in a mysterious silence. I began to be affected by the monotony and dulness of my seclusion. I looked carefully round the little chamber for a book, and at length, behind a red tea-tray, I found one. It was—I remember it well—it was Beloe's 'Sexagenarian.' I have never looked into the book since, but it made considerable impression on me at the time—a dull, melancholy impression, like that produced on us by a rainy, drizzling day; there seemed to me then a stagnant quiet, a heavy repose about the memoir, which saddened me with the idea of a man writing the biography of a life never enjoyed, and wholly unconscious that it had not been enjoyed to the utmost. It is very likely that this impression is not a just one, and were I to read the book again, it might create very different sensations. But I recollect that I said, at some passage or another, with considerable fervour, 'Well, I will never devote existence to becoming a scholar.' I had not finished the book, when the mistress entered, as if looking for a bunch of keys, but in reality to see how I was employed; a very angry glance did she cast upon my poor amusement with the 'Sexagenarian,' and, about two minutes after she left the room, a servant entered and demanded the book. The reading of the 'Sexagenarian' remains yet uncompleted, and most probably will so remain to my dying day. A gloomy evening and a sleepless night succeeded; but early next morning a ring was heard at

the gate, and from the window of my dungeon I saw the servant open the gate, and my aunt walk up the little straight riband of gravel, that intersected what was termed the front garden. In about half an hour afterwards the Doctor entered with my poor relation, the latter in tears. The Doctor had declared himself inexorable; nothing less than my expulsion would atone for my crime. Now my aunt was appalled by the word expulsion; she had heard of boys to whom expulsion had been ruin for life; on whom it had shut the gates of college; the advantages of connexion; the fold of the church; the honours of civil professions; it was a sound full of omen and doom to her ear. She struggled against what she deemed so lasting a disgrace. I remained in the dignity of silence, struck to the heart by her grief and reproaches, but resolved to show no token of remorse.

“‘Look, ma’am,’ cried the Doctor, irritated by my obstinacy; ‘look at the young gentleman’s countenance: do you see repentance there?’ My aunt looked, and I walked to the window to hide my face. This finished the business, and I returned home that day with my aunt; who saw in me a future outcast, and a man undone for life, for want of a proper facility in bearing boxes on the ear.

“Within a week from that time I was in the house of a gentleman, who professed not to keep a school, but to take pupils,—a nice distinction, that separates the schoolmaster from the tutor. There were about six of us, from the age of fifteen to eighteen. He undertook to prepare us for the University, and with him, in real earnest, I, for the first time, began *to learn*. Yes; *there* commenced an epoch both in my mind and heart,—I woke to the knowledge of books and also of myself. In one year I passed over a world of feelings. From the child I rose at once into the man. But let me tell my story methodically; and first, as to the education of the intellect. Mr. S—— was an elegant and graceful scholar, of the orthodox University *calibre*, not deeply learned, but intimately acquainted with the beauties and the subtleties of the authors he had read. You know, A——, what authors an University scholar does read, and those which he neglects. At this time, it is with those most generally neglected that I am least imperfectly acquainted; but it was not so then, as you may suppose. Before I went to Mr. S——’s I certainly had never betrayed any very

studious disposition; the ordinary and hackneyed method of construing, and parsing, and learning by heart, and making themes, whose only possible excellence was to be unoriginal, and verses, in which the highest beauty was a dexterous plagiarism;—all this had disgusted me betimes, and I *shirked* lessons with the same avidity as the rest of my tribe. It became suddenly different with Mr. S——. The first day of my arrival, I *took up* the ‘*Medea*’ of Euripides. Into what a delightful recreation did S—— manage to convert the task I had hitherto thought so wearisome,—how eloquently he dwelt on each poetical expression,—how richly he illustrated every beauty by comparisons and contrasts from the pages of other poets! What a life he breathed into the dull lecture! How glowingly, as if touched by a wand, was the Greek crabbed sentence, hitherto breathing but of lexicons and grammars, exalted into the freshness and the glory of the poet! Euripides was the first of the divine spirits of old who taught me to burn over the dreams of fiction; and so great and deep is my gratitude, that at this day I read his plays more often than I do even those of Shakspeare, and imagine that beauties speak to me from that little old worn edition, in which I then read him, that are dumb and lifeless to every heart but my own. I now studied with a new frame of mind: first, I began to admire—then to dwell upon what I admired—then to criticise, or sometimes to imitate. Within two years I had read and pondered over the works of almost all the Greek and Latin poets, historians, orators! the pages of the philosophers alone were shut to me. The divine lore of Plato, and the hard and grasping intellect of the Stagirite, S—— did not undertake to decipher and expound. I except, indeed, those hackneyed and petty portions of the latter, through which every orthodox schoolman pushes his brief but unwilling way. You recollect that passage in Gibbon’s ‘*Memoirs*,’ in which he subjoins, with a pedant’s pleasing ostentation, the list of the books he had read, I think, within a year. Judge of the gratification to my pride, when, chancing to meet with this passage, I found that my labours in this department had at least equalled those of the triumphant historian.

“I had been little more than a year with S——, and a fit, one bright spring morning, came over me—a fit of poetry. From that time the disorder increased, for I

indulged it ; and though such of my performances as have been seen by friendly eyes have been looked upon as mediocre enough, I still believe, that if ever I could win a lasting reputation, it would be through that channel. Love usually accompanies poetry, and in my case, there was no exception to the rule.

"There was a slender, but pleasant brook, about two miles from S——'s house, to which one or two of us were accustomed, in the summer days, to repair to bathe and saunter away our leisure hours. To this favourite spot I one day went alone, and crossing a field which led to the brook, I encountered two ladies, with one of whom, having met her at some house in the neighbourhood, I had a slight acquaintance. We stopped to speak to each other, and I saw the face of her companion. Alas ! were I to live ten thousand lives, there would never be a moment in which I could be alone—nor sleeping, and that face not with me !

"My acquaintance introduced us to each other. I walked home with them to the house of Miss D—— (so was the strange, who was also the younger, lady named). The next day I called upon her. The acquaintance thus commenced did not droop ; and, notwithstanding our youth—for Lucy D—— was only seventeen, and I nearly a year younger—we soon loved, and with a love, which, full of poesy and dreaming, as from our age it necessarily must have been, was not less durable, nor less heartfelt, than if it had arisen from the deeper and more earthly sources from which later life draws its affections.

"Ah ! how little did I think of what our young folly entailed upon us ! We delivered ourselves up to the dictates of our hearts, and forgot that there was a future. Neither of us had any ulterior design ; we did not think—poor children that we were—of marriage, and settlements, and consent of relations. We touched each other's hands, and were happy ; we read poetry together—and when we lifted up our eyes from the page, those eyes met, and we did not know why our hearts beat so violently ; and at length, when we spake of love, and when we called each other Lucy and —— ; when we described all that we thought in absence—and all we had felt when present—when we sat with our hands locked each in each—and at last, growing bolder, when in the still and quiet loneliness of a summer twilight we exchanged our first kiss, we did

not dream that the word forbade what seemed to us so natural; nor—feeling in our own hearts the impossibility of change—did we ever ask whether this sweet and mystic state of existence was to last for ever!

“Lucy was an only child; her father was a man of wretched character. A profligate, a gambler—ruined alike in fortune, hope, and reputation, he was yet her only guardian and protector. The village in which we both resided was near London; there Mr. D—— had a small cottage, where he left his daughter and his slender establishment for days, and sometimes for weeks together, while he was engaged in equivocal speculations—giving no address, and engaged in no professional mode of life. Lucy’s mother had died long since, of a broken heart—(that fate, too, was afterwards her daughter’s), so that this poor girl was literally without a monitor or a friend, save her own innocence—and, alas! innocence is but a poor substitute for experience. The lady with whom I had met her had known her mother, and she felt compassion for the child. She saw her constantly, and sometimes took her to her own house, whenever she was in the neighbourhood; but that was not often, and only for a few days at a time. Her excepted, Lucy had no female friend.

“Was it a wonder, then, that she allowed herself to meet me?—that we spent hours and hours together?—that she called me her only friend—her brother as well as her lover? There was a peculiarity in our attachment worth noticing. Never, from the first hour of our meeting to the last of our separation, did we ever say an unkind or cutting word to each other. Living so much alone—never meeting in the world—unacquainted with all the tricks, and doubts, and artifices of life, we never had cause for the jealousy and the reproach, the sharp suspicion, or the pre-meditated coquetry, which diversify the current of loves formed in society—the kindest language, the most tender thoughts, alone occurred to us. If anything prevented her meeting me, she never concealed her sorrow, nor did I ever affect to chide. We knew from the bottom of our hearts that we were all in all to each other—and there was never any disguise to the clear and full understanding of that delicious knowledge. Poor—poor Lucy! what an age seems to have passed since that time! How dim and melancholy, yet, oh! how faithful, are the hues in which

that remembrance is clothed! When I muse over that time, I start, and ask myself if it was real, or if I did not wholly dream it—and, with the intenseness of the dream, fancy it a truth. Many other passages in my life have been romantic, and many, too, coloured by the affections. But this short part of my existence is divided utterly from the rest—it seems to have no connexion with all else that I have felt and acted—a strange and visionary wandering out of the living world—having here no being and no parallel.

“One evening we were to meet at a sequestered and lonely part of the brook’s course, a spot which was our usual rendezvous. I waited considerably beyond the time appointed, and was just going sorrowfully away, when she appeared. As she approached, I saw that she was in tears—and she could not for several moments speak for weeping. At length I learned that her father had just returned home, after a long absence—that he had announced his intention of immediately quitting their present home and going to a distant part of the country, or—perhaps even abroad.

“And this chance so probable, so certain—this chance of separation had never occurred to us before! We had lived in the Happy Valley, nor thought of the strange and desert lands that stretched beyond the mountains around us! I was stricken, as it were, into torpor at the intelligence. I did not speak, or attempt, for several moments, to console her. At length we sat down under an old tree, and Lucy it was who spoke first. I cannot say whether Lucy was beautiful or not, nor will I attempt to describe her; for it has seemed to me that there would be the same apathy and triteness of heart necessary, to dwell coldly upon that face and figure—which are now dust—as it would ask in a bridegroom widowed ere the first intoxication was over, to minute and item every inch and article in his bridal chamber. But putting her outward attractions wholly aside, there was something in Lucy’s sweet and kind voice which would have filled me with love, even for deformity; and now, when quite forgetting herself, she thought only of comfort and hope for me, my love to her seemed to grow and expand, and leave within me no thought, no feeling, that it did not seize and colour. It is a strange thing in the history of the human heart, that the

times most sad to experience are often the most grateful to recall; and of all the passages in our brief and chequered love, none have I clung to so fondly, or cherished so tenderly, as the remembrance of that desolate and tearful hour. We walked slowly home, speaking very little, and lingering on the way—and my arm was round her waist all the time. Had we fixed any scheme—formed any plan for hope?—none! We were (and felt ourselves—nor struggled against the knowledge)—we were play-things in the hands of Fate. It is only in after-years that Wisdom (which is the gift of Prophecy) prepares us for, or delivers us from, Destiny! There was a little stile at the entrance of the garden round Lucy's home, and sheltered as it was by trees and bushes, it was there, whenever we met, we took our last adieu—and there that evening we stopped, and lingered over our parting words and our parting kiss—and at length, when I tore myself away, I looked back and saw her in the sad and grey light of the evening still there, still watching, still weeping! What, what hours of anguish and gnawing of heart must one, who loved so kindly and so entirely as she did, have afterwards endured!

“As I lay awake that night, a project, natural enough, darted across me. I would seek Lucy's father, communicate our attachment, and sue for his approbation. We might, indeed, be too young for marriage—but we could wait and love each other in the meanwhile. I lost no time in following up this resolution. The next day, before noon, I was at the door of Lucy's cottage—I was in the little chamber that faced the garden, alone with her father.

“A boy forms strange notions of a man who is considered a scoundrel. I was prepared to see one of fierce and sullen appearance, and to meet with a rude and coarse reception. I found in Mr. D—— a person who, early accustomed (for he was of gentle birth) to polished society, still preserved, in his manner and appearance, its best characteristics. His voice was soft and bland; his face, though haggard and worn, retained the traces of early beauty; and a courteous and attentive ease of deportment had been probably improved by, rather than impaired, the habits of deceiving others. I told our story to this man, frankly and fully. When I had done, he rose; he took me by the hand; he expressed some regret, yet some satisfaction, at what he had heard. He was sensible how much

peculiar circumstances had obliged him to leave his daughter unprotected; he was sensible, also, that from my birth and future fortunes, my affection did honour to the object of my choice. Nothing would have made him so happy, so proud, had I been older—had I been my own master. But I and he, alas! must be aware that my friends and guardians would never consent to my forming any engagement at so premature an age, and they and the world would impute the blame to him; for calumny (he added in a melancholy tone) had been busy with his name, and any story, however false or idle, would be believed of one who was out of the world's affections.

“All this, and much more, did he say; and I pitied him while he spoke. Our conference then ended in nothing fixed; but he asked me to dine with him the next day. In a word, while he forbade me at present to recur to the subject, he allowed me to see his daughter as often as I pleased: this lasted for about ten days. At the end of that time, when I made my usual morning visit, I saw D—— alone; he appeared much agitated. He was about, he said, to be arrested. He was undone for ever—and his poor daughter!—he could say no more—his manly heart was overcome, and he hid his face with his hands. I attempted to console him, and inquired the sum necessary to relieve him. It was considerable; and on hearing it named, I, at once, deemed myself without the power of assisting him. I was mistaken. But why dwell on so hackneyed a topic, as the skill of a sharper on the one hand, and the credulity of a dupe on the other? I saw a gentleman of the tribe of Israel—I raised a sum of money, to be repaid when I came of age, and that sum was placed in D——’s hands. My intercourse with Lucy continued: but not long. This matter came to the ears of one who had succeeded my poor aunt, now no more, as my guardian. He saw D——, and threatened him with penalties, which the sharper did not dare to brave. My guardian was a man of the world; he said nothing to me on the subject, but he begged me to accompany him on a short tour through a neighbouring county. I took leave of Lucy only for a few days as I imagined. I accompanied my guardian—was a week absent—returned—and hastened to the cottage: it was shut up—an old woman opened the

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door—they were gone, father and daughter, none knew whither!

“It was now that my guardian disclosed his share in this event, so terribly unexpected by me. He unfolded the arts of D——; he held up his character in its true light. I listened to him patiently, while he proceeded thus far; but when, encouraged by my silence, he attempted to insinuate that Lucy was implicated in her father’s artifices—that she had lent herself to decoy, to the mutual advantage of sire and daughter, the inexperienced heir of considerable fortunes, my rage and indignation exploded at once. High words ensued. I defied his authority—I laughed at his menaces—I openly declared my resolution of tracing Lucy to the end of the world, and marrying her the instant she was found. Whether or not my guardian had penetrated sufficiently into my character to see that force was not the means by which I was to be guided, I cannot say; but he softened from his tone at last—apologised for his warmth—condescended to soothe and remonstrate—and our dispute ended in a compromise. I consented to leave Mr. S——, and to spend the next year, preparatory to my going to the university, with my guardian: he promised, on the other hand, that if, at the end of that year, I still wished to discover Lucy, he would throw no obstacles in the way of my search. I was ill-contented with this compact; but I was induced to it by my firm persuasion that Lucy would write to me, and that we should console each other, at least, by a knowledge of our mutual situation and our mutual constancy. In this persuasion I insisted on remaining six weeks longer with S——, and gained my point; and that any letter Lucy might write might not be exposed to officious intervention from S—— or my guardian’s satellites, I walked every day to meet the postman who was accustomed to bring our letters. None came from Lucy. Afterwards I learned that D——, whom my guardian had wisely bought, as well as intimidated, had intercepted three letters which she had addressed to me in her unsuspecting confidence—and that she only ceased to write when she ceased to believe in me.

“I went to reside with my guardian: a man of a hospitable and liberal turn, his house was always full of guests, who were culled from the most agreeable circles in London. We lived in a perpetual round of amusement; and my uncle,

who thought I should be rich enough to afford to be ignorant, was more anxious that I should divert my mind than instruct it. Well, this year passed slowly and sadly away, despite of the gaiety around me; and, at the end of that time, I left my uncle to go to the university; but I first lingered in London to make inquiries after D——. I could learn no certain tidings of him, but heard that the most probable place to find him was a certain gaming-house in K—— Street. Thither I repaired forthwith. It was a haunt of no delicate and luxurious order of vice; the chain attached to the threshold indicated suspicion of the spies of justice; and a grim and sullen face peered jealously upon me before I was suffered to ascend the filthy and noisome staircase. But my search was destined to a brief end. At the head of the *Rouge et Noir* table, facing my eyes the moment I entered the evil chamber, was the marked and working countenance of D——.

“He did not look up—no, not once, all the time he played: he won largely—rose with a flushed face and trembling hand—descended the stairs—stopped in a room below, where a table was spread with meats and wine—took a large tumbler of Madeira, and left the house. I had waited patiently—I had followed him with a noiseless step—I now drew my breath hard, clenched my hands, as if to nerve myself for a contest, and as he paused for a moment under one of the lamps, seemingly in doubt whether to go, I laid my hand on his shoulder, and uttered his name. His eyes wandered with a leaden and dull gaze over my face before he remembered me. *Then* he recovered his usual bland smile and soft tone. He grasped my unwilling hand, and inquired with the tenderness of a parent after my health. I did not heed his words. ‘Your daughter?’ said I, convulsively.

“‘Ah! you were old friends,’ quoth he, smiling; ‘you have recovered that folly, I hope. Poor thing! she will be happy to see an old friend. You know, of course——’

“‘What?’ for he hesitated.

“‘That Lucy is married!’

“‘Married!’ and as that word left my lips, it seemed as if my very life, my very soul, had gushed forth also in the sound. When—oh! when, in the night-watch and the daily yearning, when, whatever might have been my grief, or wretchedness, or despondency, when had I dreamed,

when imaged forth even the outline of a doom like this? Married! my Lucy, my fond, my constant, my pure-hearted, and tender Lucy! Suddenly all the chilled and revolted energies of my passions seemed to re-act, and rush back upon me. I seized that smiling and hollow wretch with a fierce grasp. 'You have done this—you have broken her heart—you have crushed mine! I curse you in her name and my own! I curse you from the bottom, and with all the venom, of my soul! Wretch! wretch!' and he was as a reed in my hands.

"'Madman!' said he, as at last he extricated himself from my gripe, 'my daughter married with her free consent, and to one far better fitted to make her happy than you. Go, go—I forgive you—I also was once in love, and with *her* mother!'

"I did not answer—I let him depart.

"Behold me, now, then, entered upon a new stage of life: a long, sweet, shadowy train of dreams and fancies, and forethoughts of an unreal future, was for ever passed. I had attained suddenly to the end of that period which is as a tale from the East, 'a tale of glory and of the sun.' A startling and abrupt truth had come upon me in the night, and unawares! I was awakened, and for ever—the charm had fallen from me, and I was as other men! The little objects of earth—the real and daily present—the routine of trifles—the bustle and the contest—the poor employment and the low ambition—these were henceforth to me as to my fellow-kind. I was brought at once into the actual world; and the armour for defence was girded round me as by magic; the weapon adapted to the hardship and to the battle was in my hand. And all this had happened—love—disappointment—despair—wisdom—while I was yet a boy!

"It was a little while after this interview—but I mention it now, for there is no importance in the quarter from which I heard them—that I learned some few particulars of Lucy's marriage. There was, and still is, in the world's gossip, a strange story of a rich, foolish man, awed as well as gulled by a sharper, and of a girl torn to a church with a violence so evident that the priest refused the ceremony. But the rite was afterwards solemnised by special licence. The pith of that story has truth, and Lucy was at once the heroine and victim of the romance. Now, then, I turn to a somewhat different strain in my narrative.

“You, A——, who know so well the habits of a university *life*, need not be told how singularly monotonous and contemplative it may be made to a lonely man. The first year I was there, I mixed, as you may remember, in none of the many circles into which that curious and motley society is split. I formed, or rather returned to, my passion for study; yet the study was desultory, and wanted that system and vigour on which you have, at a later time, complimented my lettered ardour. Two or three books, of a vague and unmellowed philosophy, fell in my way, and I fed upon their crude theories. We live alone, and we form a system; we go into the world, and we see the errors in the systems of others. To judge and to invent are two opposite faculties, and are cultivated by two opposite modes of life; or, as Gibbon has expressed it, ‘Conversation enriches the understanding, but solitude is the school of genius.’

“My only recreation was in long and companionless rides; and in the flat and dreary country around our university, the cheerless aspect of nature fed the idle melancholy at my heart. In the second year of my college life I roused myself a little from my seclusion; and rather by accident than design, you will remember that my acquaintance was formed among men considered the most able and promising of our time. I appeared but to poor advantage among these young academicians, fresh as they were from public schools; their high animal spirits for ever on the wing;—ready in wit and in argument—prone now to laugh at trifles, and now earnestly to dispute on them—they stunned and confused my quiet and grave habits of mind. I have met the most brilliant of these men since, and they have been astonished, and confessed themselves astonished, even at the little and meagre reputation I have acquired, and at whatsoever conversational ability, though only by fits and starts, I may now display. They compliment me on my improvement: they mistake—my intellect is just the same—I have improved only in the facility of communicating its fruits. In the summer of that year I resolved to make a bold effort to harden my mind and conquer its fastidious reserve; and I set out to travel over the north of England, and the greater part of Scotland, in the humble character of a pedestrian tourist. Nothing ever did my character more solid good than that experiment. I was

thrown among a thousand varieties of character; I was continually forced into bustle and action, and into *providing for myself*—that great and indelible lesson towards permanent independence of character.

“One evening, in an obscure part of Cumberland, I was seeking a short cut to a neighbouring village through a gentleman’s grounds, in which there was a public path. Just within sight of the house (which was an old, desolate building, in the architecture of James the First, with gable-ends and dingy walls, and deep-sunk, gloomy windows), I perceived two ladies at a little distance before me; one seemed in weak and delicate health, for she walked slowly and with pain, and stopped often as she leaned on her companion. I lingered behind, in order not to pass them abruptly; presently they turned away towards the house, and I saw them no more. Yet that frail and bending form, as I too soon afterwards learned—that form, which I did not recognise—which, by a sort of fatality, I saw only in a glimpse, and yet for the last time on earth,—that form was the wreck of Lucy D——!

“Unconscious of this event in my destiny, I left that neighbourhood and settled for some weeks on the borders of the lake of Keswick. There, one evening, a letter, re-directed to me from London, reached me. The handwriting was that of Lucy; but the trembling and slurred characters, so different from that graceful ease which was wont to characterise all she did, filled me, even at the first glance, with alarm. This is the letter—read it: you will know, then, what I have lost.

““I write to you, my dear, my unforgotten —, the last letter this hand will ever trace. Till now, it would have been a crime to write to you; perhaps it is so still—but dying as I am, and divorced from all earthly thoughts and remembrances, save yours, I feel that I cannot quite collect my mind for the last hour until I have given you the blessing of one whom you loved once; and when that blessing is given, I think I can turn away from your image, and sever willingly the last tie that binds me to earth. I will not afflict you by saying what I have suffered since we parted—with what anguish I thought of what *you* would feel when you found me gone—and with what cruel, what fearful violence, I was forced into becoming the wretch

I now am. I was hurried, I was driven, into a dreadful and bitter duty—but I thank God that I have fulfilled it. What, what have I done, to have been made so miserable throughout life as I have been! I ask my heart, and tax my conscience, and every night I think over the sins of the day; they do not seem to me heavy, yet my penance has been very great. For the two last years I do sincerely think that there has not been one day which I have not marked with tears. But enough of this, and of myself. You, dear, dear L——, let me turn to you! Something at my heart tells me that you have not forgotten that once we were the world to each other, and even through the changes and the glories of a man's life, I think you will not forget it. True, L——, that I was a poor and friendless, and not too-well educated girl, and altogether unworthy of your destiny; but you did not think so then—and when you have lost me, it is a sad, but it is a real comfort, to feel that that thought will never occur to you. Your memory will invest me with a thousand attractions and graces I did not possess, and all that you recall of me will be linked with the freshest and happiest thoughts of that period of life in which you first beheld me. And this thought, dearest L——, sweetens death to me—and sometimes it comforts me for what has been. Had our lot been otherwise—had we been united, and had you survived your love for me (and what more probable!), my lot would have been darker even than it has been. I know not how it is—perhaps from my approaching death—but I seem to have grown old, and to have obtained the right to be your monitor and warner. Forgive me, then, if I implore you to think earnestly and deeply of the great ends of life; think of them as one might think who is anxious to gain a distant home, and who will not be diverted from his way. Oh! could you know how solemn and thrilling a joy comes over me as I nurse the belief, the certainty, that we shall meet at length, and for ever! Will not that hope also animate you, and guide you unerring through the danger and the evil of this entangled life?

“May God bless you, and watch over you—may He comfort and cheer, and elevate your heart to Him! Before you receive this I shall be no more; and my love, my care for you will, I trust and feel, have become eternal. Farewell.

L. M.’

"The letter," continued L——, struggling with his emotions, "was dated from that village through which I had so lately passed; thither I repaired that very night—Lucy had been buried the day before! I stood upon a green mound, and a few, few feet below, separated from me by a scanty portion of earth, mouldered that heart which had loved me so faithfully and so well!

"What a difference throughout the whole of this various and teeming earth a single DEATH can effect! Sky, sun, air, the eloquent waters, the inspiring mountain-tops, the murmuring and glossy wood, the very

'Glory in the grass, and splendour in the flower,'

do these hold over us an eternal spell? Are they as a part and property of an unvarying course of nature? Have they aught which is unfailing, steady—*same* in its effect? Alas! their attraction is the creature of an accident. One gap, invisible to all but ourself, in the crowd and turmoil of the world, and every thing is changed. In a single hour, the whole process of thought, the whole ebb and flow of emotion, may be revulsed for the rest of an existence. Nothing can ever seem to us as it did: it is a blow upon the fine mechanism by which we think, and move, and have our being—the pendulum vibrates aright no more—the dial hath no account with time—the process goes on, but it knows no symmetry or order; it was a single stroke that marred it, but the harmony is gone for ever!

"And yet I often think that that shock which jars on the *mental*, renders yet softer the *moral* nature. A death that is connected with love unites us by a thousand remembrances to all who have mourned: it builds a bridge between the young and the old; it gives them in common the most touching of human sympathies; it steals from nature its glory and its exhilaration, but not its tenderness. And what, perhaps, is better than all, to mourn deeply for the death of another, loosens from ourself the petty desire for, and the animal adherence to, life. We have gained the end of the philosopher, and view, without shrinking, the coffin and the pall.

"For a year my mind did not return to its former pursuits: my scholastic ambition was checked at once. Hitherto I had said, 'If I gain distinction *she* will know it:' *now* that object was no more. I could not even bear

the sight of books: my thoughts had all curdled into torpor—a melancholy listlessness filled and oppressed me—the *truditur dies die**—the day chasing day without end or profit—the cloud sweeping after cloud over the barren plain—the breath after breath passing across the unmoved mirror—these were the sole types and images of my life. I had been expected by my friends to attain some of the highest of academical rewards; you may imagine that I deceived their expectations. I left the university, and hastened to London. I was just of age. I found myself courted, and I plunged eagerly into society. The experiment was perilous; but in my case it answered. I left myself no time for thought: gambling, intrigue, dissipation, these are the occupations of polished society; they are great resources to a wealthy mourner. The ‘man’ stirred again within me; the weakness of my repinings gradually melted away beneath the daily trifles of life perpetual footsteps, though the footsteps of idlers, wore the inscription from the stone. I said to my heart, ‘Why mourn when mourning is but vanity, and to regret is only to be weak?—Let me turn to what life has left, let me struggle to enjoy.’

“Whoever long plays a part, ends by making it natural to him. At first I was ill at ease in feigning attention to frivolities; by degrees frivolities grew into importance. Society, like the stage, gives rewards intoxicating in proportion as they are immediate: the man who has but to appear behind the lamps of the orchestra to be applauded, must find all other species of fame distant and insipid. So with society, the wit and the gallant can seldom covet praise, which, if more lasting, is less *present* than that which they command by a word and a glance. And having once tasted the *éclat* of social power, they cannot resist the struggle to preserve it. This, then, grew my case, and it did me good, though it has done others evil, I lived then my summer day,—laughed, and loved, and trifled with the herd. The objects I pursued were petty, it is true; but to have *any* object was to reconcile myself to life. And now the London season was over: summer was upon us in all its later prodigality. I was no longer mournful, but I was wearied. Ambition, as I lived with the world, again dawned upon me. I said, when I saw

* [One day follows another.]

the distinction mediocrity had acquired, 'Why content myself with satirising the claim?—why not struggle against the claimant?' In a word, I again thirsted for knowledge and coveted its power. Now comes the main history of the *Student*;—but I have fatigued you enough for the present."

CONVERSATION THE FIFTH.

The History of L—— continued in his Intellectual Pursuits—Helvetius—His Faults and Merits—The Materialists—The Philosophy of Faith.

"It was observed by Descartes," said L—— (as we renewed, a day or two after our last conversation, the theme we had then begun), "'that in order to improve the mind, we ought less to learn than to contemplate.' In this sentence lies the use of retirement. There are certain moments when study is peculiarly grateful to us: but in no season are we so likely to profit by it, as when we have taken a breathing-time from the noise and hubbub of the world when the world has wearied us. Behold me, then, within a long day's journey from London, in a beautiful country, an old house, and a library collected with great labour by one of my forefathers, and augmented in more modern works, at the easy cost of expense, by myself.

"The first branch of letters to which I directed my application was Moral Philosophy; and the first book I seized upon was Helvetius. I know no work so fascinating to a young thinker as the '*Discours de l'Esprit*:' the variety, the anecdote, the illustration, the graceful criticism, the solemn adjuration, the brilliant point that characterise the work, and render it so attractive, not as a treatise only, but a composition, would alone make that writer delightful to many who mistake the end of his system, and are incapable of judging its wisdom in parts.

"His great metaphysical error is in supposing all men born with the same capacity; in resolving all effects of character and genius to education. For, in the first place, the weight of proof being thrown upon him, he does not prove the fact; and, secondly, if he did prove it, neither we nor his system would be a whit the better for it; for the utmost human and possible care in education cannot make

all men alike;* and whether a care *above* humanity could do so, is, I apprehend, of very little consequence in the eyes of practical and sensible beings. Yet even this dogma has been beneficial, if not true: for the dispute it occasioned obliged men to examine, and *to allow* the wonders that education *can* effect, and the *general* features in common which a common mode of education can bestow upon a people;—grand truths, to which the human race will owe all that is feasible in its progress towards amelioration! But, passing from this point, and steering from the metaphysical to the more plainly moral portion of his school, let us see whether he has given to that most mystical word VIRTUE its true solution. We all know the poetical and indistinct meanings with which the lofty soul of Plato, and the imitative jargon of his followers, clothed the word: a symmetry, a harmony, a beautiful abstraction, invariable, incomprehensible—that is the Platonic virtue. Then comes the hard and shrewd refining away of the worldly school. ‘What is virtue here,’ say they, ‘is vice at our antipodes; the laws of morals are arbitrary and uncertain—

‘Imposteur à la Mecque, et prophète à Médine;’ †

there is no permanent and immutable rule of good; virtue is but a dream.’ Helvetius is the first who has—not invented, but—rendered popular, this great, this useful, this all-satisfying interpretation, ‘Virtue is the habitude of directing our actions to the public good; the love of Virtue is but the desire of the general happiness; virtuous actions are those which contribute to that happiness.’ In this clear and beautiful explanation all contradictions are solved: actions may be approved in one country, condemned in another, yet this interpretation will remain unchanged in its truth. What may be for the public

* For chance being included in Helvetius’s idea of education, and, indeed, according to him (Essay iii. chap. 1) “making the greatest share of it,” it is evident that we must agree in what he himself almost immediately afterwards says, viz. “That no persons being placed exactly in the same circumstances, no persons *can* receive exactly the same education”—*id est*, no persons can be exactly the same—the question then is reduced to a mere scholastic dispute. As long as both parties agree that no persons *can* be made exactly the same, it matters very little from what quarter comes the impossibility.

† [Impostor at Mecca, and prophet at Medina.] Voltaire, “Mahomet,” Act i.

good in China, may not be so in the Hebrides; yet, so long as we consult the public good wheresoever we are thrown, our intentions are virtuous. We have thus, in every clime, one star always before us; and, without recurring to the dreams of Plato, we are not driven, by apparent inconsistencies, to find virtue itself a dream. 'The face of Truth is not less fair and beautiful for all the counterfeit visors which have been put upon her.' *"

A. And it is from this explanation of the end of virtue that Bentham has deduced his definition of the end of government. Both tend to the public good; or, in yet broader terms, the greatest happiness of the greatest number. It is a matter worthy of much pondering, to think that the end of virtue and the end of good government can only have the same explanation.

L. Yes; and hence a surpassing merit in Helvetius, more than any reasoner before him, he united public virtues with private. Though so excellent, so exemplary himself, in the minor charities and graces of life, he forbore, like egotistical preachers, to dwell upon them: they are less important to mankind than the great principles of public conduct—principles which rule states and enlighten them. It was a noble truth at that time, the father of how much that is inestimable now, to proclaim, "that, in order to perfectionise our moral state, legislators had two methods: the first, to unite private interests to the general interest; the other, to advance the progress and diffusion of intellect." This is a maxim the people should wear in their hearts.

A. True; before Helvetius, moralists were in league with the ills that are: they preached to man to amend himself, not to amend his laws, without which all amelioration is partial. To what use would it be to tell the modern Greeks not to lie? Give them a code in which to lie would be to sin against self-interest.

L. The form of government gives its tone to popular opinion. It is in proportion as popular opinion honours or neglects a virtue, that that virtue is popularly followed. In commercial countries, wealth is respectability; in despotic countries, flattery is considered wisdom: the passions lead men to action, and the passions are excited according to the reward proposed to them. These are

* Shaftesbury.

grave and weighty truths : we are to thank Helvetius if they are now known.

A. But I have diverted you from the thread of your narrative. To what new studies did your regard for Helvetius direct you ?

L. It did not immediately lead to new studies, but gave a more solid direction to those I had formerly indulged. I had, as I mentioned, been before addicted to abstract speculation ; but it was of a dreamy and wild cast. I now sought to establish philosophy on the basis of common sense. I recommenced, then, a stern and resolute course of metaphysical study ; giving, indeed, a slighter attention to the subtleties which usually occupy the student, than to the broad principles on which the spirit of human conduct and of our daily actions secretly depends. Moral philosophy is the grandest of all sciences : metaphysics, abstracted from moral philosophy, is at once the most pedantic and the most frivolous. And that man is indeed delirious “*qui verborum minutiis rerum frangit pondera.*”*

But I soon grew chilled and dissatisfied with the materialists. Helvetius charmed my fancy—sharpened my intellect—but filled not my soul. Locke, Condillac, alike left me disappointed—and asking solutions to questions which they either dared not answer, or discouragingly evaded. Then came the Scotch and (so far as they were open to me) the German reasoners, with their far more ennobling systems : the wild and starry darkness of the last—the generous ardour, the prodigal and earnest faith, that distinguish the first. But I could not shut my eyes to the hair-splitting and refining, the quackery and fanaticism, of the one—the haste, the rashness, the illogical intemperance, of the other. Even Plato, with all his dreams, seemed to me more conclusive than these, his latest imitators. Left, then, by my guides upon this vast and illimitable plain—awe-struck and saddened by my own doubts, I resolved, at least, not to despair,—for suddenly I felt that I was not alone ! My books were deaf and sealed, but round me was the Universe, and the life of things became my teacher !—Yes, not from metaphysics, but from *analogy* I rebuilt up my crumbling faith, and became a Philosopher to myself. Happy he whose doubts resolve themselves as mine did, into that

* [Who breaks the weight of things (otherwise fritters them away) by a minutiae of words.]

devout, confiding, immaterial hope, which seems to suit best our limited lore below—to support most our virtue, and exalt our souls. Some men there are of stern minds, of long-practised self-denial, of habits whose austerity has become a pleasure, who may be both good and happy without a belief in an Hereafter. Lowlier than these, I own myself one amongst the herd. And never did I feel assured of the strength of my own heart, and trustful to subdue its human errors and its hourly sorrows, until I saw bright before me the Birthright and Eden of Immortality. There is a Philosophy, attempted, it is true, but yet unattained—a Philosophy which this century ought to produce out of the ashes of the Materialism of the last—it is the Philosophy of Faith!

CONVERSATION THE SIXTH.

The History concluded—Progress from Morals to History—A State of Doubt most favourable to the Study of the Past—Philosophical Historians dangerous—Hume and Gibbon—The Advantages of Tacitus and Polybius in actual Experience—History the Accuser of Mankind—The Greeks—Patriotism and Philanthropy—The Errors of Old—The Divine Hope of the Future.

“SLOWLY and reluctantly,” continued L—— (resuming the next day the thread of his intellectual history), “did I turn from the consideration of motives to that of actions—from Morals to History. Volney has said, in his excellent lectures, that the proper state of mind for the examination of history, is that in which we ‘hold the judgment in suspense.’ This truth is evident; yet they who allow the doctrine when couched in the above phrase, might demur if the phrase were a little altered, and instead of a suspension of judgment, we spoke of a *state of doubt*. It is true! in this state—a state of investigating doubt, history *should* be studied. In doubt, all the faculties of the mind are aroused—we sift, we weigh, we examine—every page is a trial to the energies of the understanding. But confidence is sleepy and inert. If we make up our minds beforehand to believe all we are about to read, the lecture glides down the memory without awakening one thought by the way. We may be stored with dates and legends; we may be able to conclude our periods by a fable about Rome;

but we do not feel that we have reasoned as well as read. Our minds may be fuller, but our intellects are not sharper than they were before: we have studied, but not investigated:—to what use investigation to those who are already persuaded? There is the same difference in the advantage of history to him who weighs, because he mistrusts, and to him who discriminates nothing, because he believes all, as there is between the value of a commonplace-book and a philosophical treatise. The first may be more full of facts than the last, but the last is facts turned to use. It is this state of rational doubt which a metaphysical course of study naturally induces. It is, therefore, *after* the investigation of Morals, that we should turn to History. Nor is this all the advantage which we derive from the previous study of morals. History would be, indeed, an old almanack to him who knows neither what is right nor what is wrong; where governments have been wise, where erroneous. History, regarded in the light of political utility, is, to quote Volney again, ‘a vast collection of moral and social experiments, which mankind make involuntarily and very expensively on themselves.’ But we must know the principles of the science before we can apply the experiments.”

A. And yet, while the real uses of history are philosophical, a mere narrator of facts is often far better than a philosophical historian.

L. Because it is better to reflect ourselves than to suffer others to reflect for us. A philosopher has a system; he views things according to his theory: he is unavoidably partial; and, like Lucian’s painter, he paints his one-eyed princes in profile.

A. It is especially in our language that the philosophical historians have been most dangerous. No man can give us history through a falser medium than Hume and Gibbon have done.

L. And this not only from the occasional inaccuracy of their facts, but their general way of viewing facts. Hume tells the history of factions, and Gibbon the history of dynasties—the People, the People, are altogether omitted by both. The fact is, neither of them had seen enough of the mass of men to feel that history should be something more than a Book of Kings, however wisely chronicled it be. They are fastidious and graceful scholars; their natural leanings are towards the privileged elegances of life: eter-

nally sketching human nature, they give us, perhaps, a skeleton tolerably accurate—it is the flesh and blood they are unable to accomplish: their sympathies are for the courtly—their minds were not robust enough to feel sympathies with the undiademmed and unlaurelled tribes: each most pretends to what he most wants—Hume, with his smooth affectation of candour, is never candid; and Gibbon, perpetually philosophising, is rarely philosophical.

A. Tacitus and Polybius are not easily equalled.

L. And why? Because both Tacitus and Polybius had seen the world in more turbulent periods than our historians have done; the knowledge of their kind was not lightly printed, but deeply and fearfully furrowed, upon their hearts; their shrewd, yet dark wisdom, was the fruit of a terrible experience. Gibbon boasts of the benefit he derived to his History from his military studies in the militia; it was from no such holyday service that Polybius learned *his* method of painting wars. As the Megalopolitan passed through his stormy and bold career; as he took rough lessons from the camp, and imbued himself with the cold sagacity which the diplomatic intrigues he shared both required and taught, he was slowly acquiring that mass of observation, that wonderful intuition into the true spirit of facts, that power of seeing at a glance the Improbable, and through its clouds and darkness seizing at once upon the True, which characterise the fragments of his great history, and elevate, what in other hands would have been but a collection of military bulletins, into so inestimable a manual for the statesman and the civilian. And when we glance over the life of the far greater Roman, we see no less visibly how much the wisdom of the closet was won by the stern nature of those fields of action in which he who had witnessed the reign of a Domitian was cast. When we grow charmed to his page by the gloomy intenseness of his colourings—when crime after crime, in all the living blackness of those fearful days, arises before us—when in his grasping aphorisms the fierce secrets of Tyranny lie bared before us—when in every sentence we shudder at a record—in every character we mark a portent, yet a mirror, of the times, we feel at once how necessary to that force and fidelity must have been the severity and darkness of his experience. Through action, toil, public danger, and public honours, he sought his road to philosophy, a road beset

with rapine and slaughter; every slave that fell graven in his heart a warning, every horror he experienced animated and armed his genius. Saturate with the spirit of his age, his page has made that age incarnate to posterity—actual, vivified, consummate, and entire. If, indeed, it be dread and ghastly, it is the dread and ghastliness of an unnatural life. Time has not touched it with a charnel touch. The Magician has preserved the race in their size and posture;—motionless, breathless,—in all else, unchanged as in life.

But, turning from these criticisms on historians to the effect which History produces, I cannot but think that its general effect tends to harden the heart against mankind. Its experience, so long, so consistent, so unvarying, seems a silent and irresistible accuser of the human species. Men have taken the greatest care to preserve their most unanswerable vilifier. All forms of government, however hostile to each other, seem alike in one effect—the general baseness of the governed. What differs the boasted Greece from the condemned Persia?—the former produces some hundred names which the latter cannot equal. True! But what are a few atoms culled from the sea-sands?—what a few great men to the happiness of the herd? Are not the Greek writers, the Greek sages, more than all others, full of contempt for the mass around them?—the fraud, the ingratitude, the violence, the meanness, the misery of their fellow-beings—do not these make the favourite subject of ancient satire and ancient declamation? And even among their great men, how few on whose merits History can at once decide!—how few unsullied, even by the condemnation of their own time! Plutarch says that the good citizens of Athens were the best men the world ever produced; but that her bad citizens were unparalleled for their atrocities, their impiety, their perfidy.

A. And even the best were but citizens of the state—not citizens of the world. Philanthropy is the only consistent species of public virtue. A mere patriot may be honest in one thing, yet a knave in all else.

L. And it is by philanthropy, perhaps (a modern affection), that we may yet add a more pleasing supplement to the histories of the past. This can alone correct the feeling of despair for human amendment, which history otherwise produces: we can, alas! only counteract the influence of past facts by recurring to the dreams of

enthusiasts for the future; by clinging to some one or other of those dreams; and by a hope, that, if just, is at least unfounded on any example in former ages, that by the increase of knowledge, men will *approach* to that political perfection, which does not depend alone on the triumphs of art, or the advance of sciences—which does not depend alone on palaces, and streets, and temples, and a few sounding and solemn names, but which shall be felt by the common herd, viz. by the *majority* of the people; felt by them in improved comfort; in enlightened minds: in consistent virtues; in effects, we must add, which no causes have hitherto produced. For why study the mysteries of Legislation and Government? Why ransack the past, and extend our foresight to distant ages? if our skill can only improve, as hitherto it has only improved, the condition of oligarchies—if it can only give the purple and the palace to the few—if it must leave in every state the degraded many to toil, to sweat, to consume the day in a harsh and sterile conflict with circumstances for a bare subsistence; their faculties dormant; their energies stifled in the cradle; strangers to all that ennobles, refines, exalts,—if at every effort to rise, they are encountered by a law, and every enterprise darkens with them into a crime—if, when we cast our eyes along the vast plains of life, we see but one universal arena of labour, bounded on all sides by the gibbet, the hulks, the wheel, the prison; all ignorance, prejudice, bloodshed, sin;—if this state is to endure for ever on earth, why struggle for a freedom which few only can enjoy—for an enlightenment, which can but call forth a few luminous sparks from an atmosphere of gloom: for a political prosperity which props a throne, and gives steeds to a triumphal car, and animates the winged words of eloquence, or the golden tomes of verse, or the lofty speculation of science—and yet leaves these glories and effects but as fractions that make no calculable deduction from the sum of human miseries? Alas! if this be the eternal doom of mortality, let us close our books, let us shut the avenues to our minds and hearts, let us despise benevolence as a vanity, and speculation as a dream. Let us play the Teian with life, think only of the Rose and Vine; and since our most earnest endeavours can effect so little to others, let us not extend our hopes and our enjoyments beyond the small and safe circle of Self! No: man must either believe in the

perfectibility of his species, or virtue and the love of others are but a heated and objectless enthusiasm.

A. And this belief, whether false or true, gains ground daily.

L. I must own that, until it broke upon me, I saw nothing in learning but despondency and gloom. As clouds across the Heaven, darkening the light, and fading one after the other into air, seemed the fleeting shadows which Philosophy had called forth between the Earth and Sun. If, day after day, in my solitary retreat, I pondered over the old aspirations of sages, with the various jargon with which, in the pursuit of Truth, they have disguised Error, I felt that it was not to teach myself to be wise, but to learn to despair of wisdom. What a waste of our power—what a mockery of our schemes—seemed the fabrics they had erected—the Pythagorean Unity; and the Heraclitan Fire, to which that Philosopher of Woe reduced the origin of all things; and the "*Homoomeria*," and primitive "Intelligence" of Anaxagoras; and the Affinity and Discord of Empedocles, and the Atoms of Epicurus, and the bi-part and pre-existent Soul which was evoked by Plato: was there not something mournful in the wanderings and chimæras of these lofty natures?—fed as they were in caves and starry solitudes, and winged by that intense and august contemplation, which they of the ancient world were alone able to endure. And when, by a sounder study, or a more fortunate train of conjecture, the erratic enterprise of their knowledge approached the truth—when Democritus, for a moment, and at intervals, eyes by a glimmering light the true courses of the Heavenly Host—or when Aristippus, amidst the roseate and sparkling errors of his creed, yet catches a glimpse of the true doctrine of morals and the causes of human happiness, or when the lofty Zeno and the sounder Epicurus, differing in the path, meet at length at the true goal, and then again start forth into delusion: their very approach to truth, so momentary and partial, only mocks the more the nature of human wanderings,—"*caput ac fontem ignorant, divinant, ac delirant omnes.*"* Couple then the records of Philosophy with those of History; couple the fallacies of the wise with the sorrows and the sufferings of the herd, and how

* [All doubt, divine, and diverge from, the very head and fountain.]—*Erasmii Colloquia*: "*Hedonius et Spudæus.*"

dark and mournful is our knowledge of the past, and therefore our prospects of the future! And how selfish does this sentiment render our ambition for the present! How vain seem the mighty struggle and small fruit of those around us! Look at this moment at the agitation and ferment of the world: with what pretence can they who believe that the Past is the mirror of the Future, lash themselves into interest for any cause or principle, save that immediately profitable to self! To them, if deeply and honestly acquainted with history and the progress of knowledge—to them how vain must seem the struggles and aspirations of the crowd! Why do the people imagine a vain thing? Why the hope and the strife of the rejoicing Gaul; or the slow murmur, that foretells irruption through the bright lands of Italy? Why should there be blood spilt in the Vistula? or why should the armed Belgian dispute for governments and kings? Why agitate *ourselves* for a name—an ideal good? These orations, and parchments, and meetings, and threats, and prayers—this clamour for “reform,”—how miserable a delusion must they seem to him who believes that the *mass* of men must for ever be “the hewers of wood and drawers of water!” To them no change raises the level of existence; famine still urges on to labour—want still forbids knowledge. What matters whether this law be passed, or that fleet be launched, or that palace built, their condition is the same; the happiest concurrence of accident and wisdom brings *them* but a greater certainty of labour. A free state does not redeem them from toil, nor a despotism increase it. So long as the sun rises and sets, so long must their bread be won with travail, and their life “be rounded,” with the temptation to crime. It seems, therefore, to me impossible for a wise and well-learned man to feel *sincerely*, and without self-interest, for the public good, unless he believe that laws and increased knowledge will at length, however gradually, devise some method of raising the great multitude to a nearer equality of comfort and intelligence with the few; that human nature is capable of a degree of amelioration that it seems never hitherto to have reached; and that the amelioration will be felt from the surface to the depth of the great social waters, over which the spirit shall move. The Republics of old never effected this object. To expect it, society must be altered as well as legislation. It is for

this reason that I feel glad with an ingenious and admirable writer,* that even theory is at work; I am glad that inquiry wanders, even to fallacies and chimæras. Out of that inquiry good may yet come; and some future Bacon overturn the axioms of an old school, polluted, not redeemed, by every new disciple. To the man who finds it possible to entertain this hope, how different an aspect the world wears! Casting his glance forward, how wondrous a light rests upon the future! the farther he extends his vision, the brighter the light. Animated by a hope more sublime than wishes bounded to earth ever before inspired, he feels armed with the courage to oppose surrounding prejudice, and the warfare of hostile customs. No sectarian advantage, no petty benefit is before him; he sees but the Regeneration of Mankind. It is with this object that he links his ambition, that he unites his efforts and his name! From the disease, and the famine, and the toil around, his spirit bursts into prophecy, and dwells among future ages; even if in error, he luxuriates through life in the largest benevolence, and dies—if a visionary—the visionary of the grandest dream!

CONVERSATION THE SEVENTH.

Description of an English Landscape.—The Animal Enjoyment of Life.—Solitary Persons the least Repining.—Cowley on the Town and Country.—L——'s Mental Progress from History to Works of Imagination.—He is inspired to Emulation, not by the fame of Genius, but by the Luxury of Composition.—Genius is peculiarly susceptible of Enjoyment.—It even enjoys Sadness.—L——'s Studies interrupted.

It is a singularly pretty spot in which L—— resides. Perhaps some of the most picturesque scenery in England is in the neighbourhood of London; and as I rode the other day, in the later April, along the quiet lane which branches from the main road to L——'s house—Spring never seemed to me to smile upon a lovelier prospect. The year had broken into its youth as with a sudden and hilarious bound. A little while before, I had passed along the same road—all was sullen and wintry—the March wind had swept along dry hedges and leafless trees—the only birds I had encountered were two melancholy sparrows in the middle of

* The Author of "Essays on the Publication of Opinion," &c.

the road—too dejected even to chirp ; but now a glory had passed over the earth—the trees were dight in that delicate and lively verdure, which we cannot look upon without feeling a certain freshness creep over the heart. Here and there thick blossoms burst in clusters from the fragrant hedge, and (as a schoolboy pranked out in the finery of his grandsire) the whitethorn seemed to mock at the past winter by assuming its garb. Above, about, around—all was in motion, in progress, in joy—the birds, which have often seemed to me like the messengers from earth to heaven—charged with the homage and gratitude of Nature, and gifted with the most eloquent of created voices to fulfil the mission ;—the birds were upon every spray, their music upon every breath of air. Just where the hedge opened to the left, I saw the monarch of English rivers glide on his serene and silver course ; and in the valley on the other side of his waters, village, spire, cottage and (at rarer yet thick intervals) the abodes of opulence, looked out among the luxuriant blossoms, and the vivid green by which they were encircled. It was a thoroughly English scene. For I have always thought that the peculiar characteristic of English scenery is a certain air of content. There is a happier smile on the face of an English landscape than I have ever beheld, even in the landscapes of the South ; a happier though a less voluptuous smile—as if Nature were more at home.

Presently I came to the turn of the lane which led at once to L——'s house ; in a few minutes I was at the gate. Within, the grounds, though not extensive, have the appearance of being so—the trees are of great size, and the turf is broken into many a dell and hollow, which gives the lawn a wild and a park-like appearance. The house is quaint and old-fashioned (not Gothic or Elizabethan) in its architecture ; it seems to have been begun at the latter period of the reign of James the First, and to have undergone sundry alterations, the latest of which might have occurred at the time of Anne. The old brown bricks are three parts covered with jessamine and ivy, and the room in which L—— generally passes his day, looks out upon a grove of trees, amidst which, at every opening, are little clusters and parterres of flowers. And in this spot, half wood half garden, I found my friend, seduced from his books by the warmth and beauty of the day,

seated on a rustic bench, and surrounded by the numerous dogs that, of all species and all sizes, he maintains in general idleness and favour.

"I love," said L——, speaking of these retainers, "like old Montaigne, to have animal life around me. The mere consciousness and sensation of existence are so much stronger in brutes than in ourselves, their joy in the common air and sun is so vivid and buoyant, that I (who think we should sympathise with all things, if we would but condescend to remark all things,) feel a contagious exhilaration of spirits, in their openness to pleasurable perceptions. And how happy in reality the sentiment of life is!—how glorious a calm we inhale in the warm sun!—how rapturous a gladness in the fresh winds!—how profound a meditation and delight in the stillness of the 'starry time!'—how sufficient alone to make us happy is external nature, were it not for these eternal cares that we create for ourselves! Man would be happy but that he is forbidden to be so by men. The most solitary persons have always been the least repining.

A. But then their complacency arises from the stagnation of the intellect—it is indifference, not happiness.

L. Pardon me, I cannot think so. How many have found solitude not only, as Cicero calls it, the *pabulum* of the mind, but the nurse of their genius! How many of the world's most sacred oracles have been uttered like those of Dodona, from the silence of deep woods! Look over the lives of men of genius, how far the larger proportion of them have been passed in loneliness! Now, for my part, I think solitude has its reward both for the dull and the wise;—the former are therein more sensible to the mere animal enjoyment which is *their* only source of happiness: the latter are not (by the irritation, the jealousy, the weariness, the round of small cares, which the crowd produces) distracted from that contemplation, and those pursuits, which constitute the chief luxury of their life and the *το καλον* of their desires. There is a feeling of escape, when a man who has cultivated his faculties rather in thought than action, finds himself, after a long absence in cities, returned to the *spissa nemora domusque Nympharum*,* which none but himself can comprehend. With what a deep and earnest enthusiasm Cowley luxuriates in that, the

* [The thick woods and home of the Nymphs.]

most eloquent essay perhaps in the language!—although, as a poet, the author of the “Davideis” was idolised far beyond his merits by a courtly audience, and therefore was not susceptible, like most of his brethren, of that neglect by the crowd which disgusts our heart by mortifying our vanity. How calm, how august, and yet how profoundly joyful, is the vein with which he dwells on the contrast of the Town and the Country! “We are here among the vast and noble scenes of Nature; we are there among the pitiful shifts of policy. We walk here in the light and open ways of Divine bounty; we grope there in the dark and confused labyrinths of human malice!”

A. There is a zest even in turning from the harsher subjects, not only of life, but of literature, to passages like these! How these green spots of the poetry of sentiment soften and regenerate the heart!

L. And so, after wading through the long and dry details, which constitute the greater part of history, you may conceive the pleasure with which I next turned to that more grateful method of noting the progress of nations,—the history of their literature.

A. I thank you for renewing the thread broken off in our last conversation. We had been speaking of the reflections which history awakened in your mind. That necessary (and yet how seldom an useful) study, was followed then by the relaxation of more graceful literature.

L. Yes, and in the course of this change, a singular effect was produced in my habits of mind. Hitherto I had read without much emulation. Philosophy, while it animates the reason, damps the ambition. And so few among historians awaken our more lively feelings, and so little in history encourages us to pass the freshness of our years in commemorating details at once frivolous to relate and laborious to collect, that I did not find myself tempted by either study to compose a treatise or a record. But Fiction now opened to me her rich and wonderful world—I was brought back to early (and early are always aspiring) feelings—by those magical fascinations which had been so dear to my boyhood. The sparking stores of wit and fancy, the deep and various mines of poesy, lay before me, and I was covetous! I desired to possess, and to reproduce. There is a northern legend of a man

who had resisted all the temptations the earth could offer. The demon opened to his gaze the marvels beneath the earth. Trees effulgent with diamond fruits, pillars of gold, and precious stones, fountains with water of a million hues, and over all a floating and delicious music instead of air. The tempter succeeded:—envy and desire were created in the breast that had been calm till then. This weakness was a type of mine!—I was not only charmed with the works around me, but I became envious of the rapture which they who created them must, I fancied, have enjoyed. I recalled that intense and all-glowing description which De Staël has given in her “Essay on Enthusiasm,” of the ecstasy which an author enjoys, not in the publication, but the production, of his work. ‘Could Shakspeare,’ I exclaimed, ‘have erected his mighty Temple to Fame, without feeling, himself, the inspiration which consecrated the shrine? Must he not have enjoyed, above all the rest of mankind, every laugh that rang from Falstaff, or every moral that came from the melancholy Jacques? Must he not have felt the strange and airy rapture of a preternatural being, when his soul conjured up the Desert Island, the Caliban, and the Ariel? Must he not have been intoxicated with a gladness, lighter and more delicate, yet, oh! more exquisite and rich, than any which the harsh merriment of earth can father, when his fancy dwelt in the summer noon under the green boughs with Titania, and looked on the ringlets of the fairies, dewy with the kisses of the flowers? And was there no delight in the dark and weird terror with which he invoked the grisly Three, “So withered and so wild in their attire,” who, in foretelling, themselves created, the bloody destinies of Macbeth?’ So far from believing, as some have done, that the feelings of genius are inclined to sadness and dejection—it seemed to me *vitally necessary* to genius to be vividly susceptible to enjoyment. The poet in prose or verse—the Creator—can only stamp his images forcibly on the page in proportion as he has keenly felt, ardently nursed, and long brooded over them. And how few among the mass of writings that float down to posterity are not far more impregnated with the bright colouring of the mind, than its gloomier hues! Homer, Virgil, Ariosto, Voltaire, Goethe, Cervantes, and—perhaps, a lower grade—Scott, Fielding, Le Sage, Molière. What a serene and

healthful cheerfulness,—nay, what a quick and vigorous zest of life, are glowingly visible in all! It is with a very perverted judgment that some have fastened on the few exceptions to the rule, and have asserted that the gloom of Byron or the morbidity of Rousseau characterise not the individual, but the tribe. Nay, even in these exceptions, I imagine that, could we accurately examine, we should find, that the capacity to enjoy strongly pervaded their temperament, and made out of their griefs a luxury! Who shall say whether Rousseau, breathing forth his “Reveries,” or Byron tracing the pilgrimage of “Childe Harold,” did not more powerfully feel the glory of the task, than the sorrow it was to immortalise? Must they not have been exalted with an almost divine gladness, by the beauty of their own ideas, the melody of their own murmurs, the wonders of their own art? Perhaps we should find that Rousseau did not experience a deeper pleasure, though it might be of a livelier hue, when he dwelt on his racy enjoyment of his young and pedestrian excursion than when in his old age, and his benighted, but haunted mood, he filled the solitude with imaginary enemies, and bade his beloved lake echo to self-nursed woes.

You see then that I was impressed, erroneously or truly, with the belief, that in cultivating the imagination I should cultivate my happiness. I was envious, not so much of the *fame* of the ornaments of letters, as of the *enjoyment* they must have experienced in acquiring it. I shut myself in a closer seclusion, not to study the thoughts of others, but to embody my own. I had been long ambitious of the deepest hoards of learning. I now became ambitious of adding to the stores of a lighter knowledge.

A. And did you find that luxury in ideal creation which you expected?

L. I might have done so, but I stopped short in my apprenticeship.

A. And the cause?

L. Why, one bright day in June, as I was sitting alone in my room, I was suddenly aroused from my reverie by a sharp and sudden pain, that shot through my breast, and when it left me I fainted away. I was a little alarmed by this circumstance, but thought the air might relieve me, I walked out, and ascended a hill at the back of the house.

My attention being now aroused and directed towards myself, I was startled to find my breath so short that I was forced several times to stop in the ascent. A low, short cough, which I had not heeded before, now struck me as a warning, which I ought to prepare myself to obey. That evening, as I looked in the glass, for the first time for several weeks with any care in the survey, I perceived that my apprehensions were corroborated by the change in my appearance. My cheeks were fallen, and I detected, in the midst of their natural paleness, that hectic which never betrays its augury. I saw that my days were numbered, and I lay down on my pillow that night with the resolve to prepare for death. The next day when I looked over my scattered papers; when I saw the mighty schemes I had commenced, and recalled the long and earnest absorption of all my faculties, which even that commencement had required, I was seized with a sort of despair. It was evident that I could now perform nothing great, and as for trifles, ought they to occupy the mind of one whose eye was on the grave? There was but one answer to this question. I committed my fragments to the flames; and now there came, indeed, upon me a despondency I had not felt before. I saw myself in the condition of one who, after much travail in the world, has found a retreat, and built a home, and who in the moment he says to his heart, "Now thou shalt have rest!" beholds himself summoned away. I had obtained an object—it was torn from me—my staff was broken, and it was only left to me to creep to the tomb, without easing by any support the labour of the way. I had coveted no petty aim—I had not bowed my desires to the dust and mire of men's common wishes—I had bid my ambition single out a lofty end and pursue it by generous means. In the dreams of my spirit, I had bound the joys of my existence to this one aspiring hope, nor had I built that hope on the slender foundations of a young inexperience—I had learned, I had thought I had toiled, before I ventured in my turn to produce. And now, between myself and the fulfilment of schemes that I had wrought with travail, and to which I looked for no undue reward—there yawned the Eternal Gulf. It seemed to me as if I was condemned to leave life, at the moment I had given life an object. There was a bitterness in these thoughts which it was not easy to counteract. In

vain, I said to my soul, "Why grieve?—Death itself does not appal thee. And, after all, what can life's proudest objects bring thee better than rest?"—But we learn at last to conquer our destiny by surveying it; there is no regret which is not to be vanquished by resolve. And now, when I saw myself declining day by day, I turned to those more elevating and less earthly meditations, which supply us, as it were, with wings, when the feet fail. They have become to me dearer than the dreams which they succeeded, and they whisper to me of a brighter immortality than that of Fame.

CONVERSATION THE EIGHTH.

L——'s rapid Decline.—The Memory becomes more acute as we approach Death.—L——'s Observations on the saying that 'Life is a Jest.'—The Vanity of Ambition.—Our Errors arise from our Desire to be greater than we are.—Thoughts on Superstition.—The early Astrologers.—Philanthropy.—The Fear of assisting in Changes of which the Good to a future Generation may not compensate the Evil to the present.—Contrast between the tranquil Lives of Men of Genius and the Revolutions their Works effect.—The Hope of Intercourse with great Minds in a Future State.—The Sanctity of the Grave.—The "Phædo" of Plato.—The Picture of the last Moments of Socrates.—The unsatisfactory Arguments of the Heathen for the Immortality of the Soul.—Revealed Religion has led Men more logically to the Arguments for Natural Theology.—Disbelief involves us in greater Difficulties than Faith.—Our Doubts do not dishearten us if we once believe in God.—L——'s last Hours.—His Farewell to Nature.—His Death.

It is with a melancholy pleasure that I have been made sensible of the interest that these conversations have excited in the gentler and more thoughtful of the tribe of readers.* I have received more anonymous letters than I care to name, complaining of the long silence I have preserved, and urging me to renew Dialogues, already so often repeated, that I might well imagine (knowing how impatient the readers of a periodical generally are of subjects continued in a series) that they had sufficiently exhausted the indulgence of the public. To me individually, there is little that is flattering in any interest these papers may

* The reader will here remember that these dialogues first appeared in a detached shape in the "New Monthly Magazine."

[The first instalment of the series under its original title as "Conversations of an Ambitious Student in Ill-health," appeared in the number of the Magazine for December, 1830, and the concluding portion in that of March, 1832.]

have created. I am but the echo of another; or, to use an old, yet still graceful metaphor, I only furnish the string which keeps the flowers together. Alas! the garland is now complete, and I have only to suspend it on the tomb.

And now I saw L—— daily, for his disease increased rapidly upon him, and I would not willingly have lost any rays of that sun that was so soon to set for ever. Nothing creates in us so many confused and strange sentiments as a conversation on those great and lofty topics of life or nature, which are rarely pleasing, except to Wisdom which contemplates, and Genius which imagines;—a conversation on such topics with one whose lips are about to be closed for an eternity. This thought impresses the most common words with a certain sanctity; what, then, must it breathe into matters which, even in ordinary times, are consecrated to our most high-wrought emotions and our profoundest hopes?

The day was calm and cloudless as, towards the end of August, I rode leisurely to L——'s solitary house; his strength had so materially declined during the few days past, that I felt a gloomy presentiment that I was about to see him for the last time. He had always resolved, and I believe this is not uncommon with persons in his disease, not to take to his bed until absolutely compelled. His habitual amusements, few and tranquil, were such that he could happily continue them to the last; and his powers of conversation, naturally so rich and various, were not diminished by the approach of death: perhaps they were only rendered more impressive by the lowered tones of the sweetest of human voices, or the occasional cough that mingled his theories on this world with a warning of the next. I have observed that as in old people the memory usually becomes the strongest of the faculties,* so it also does with those whom mortal sickness, equally with age, detaches from the lengthened prospects of the future. Forbidden the objects from without, the mind turns within for its occupation, and the thoughts, formerly impelled

* That is, properly speaking, the memory so far as it embraces early acquisitions or transactions. It is a common observation, that old people remember what happened fifty years ago, and forget what happened yesterday. Their souls have gone back to Youth as the fitting port for the voyage to Immortality.

towards hope, nourish themselves on retrospection. Once I had not noted in L—— that extraordinary strength of memory—the ready copiousness of its stores—that he now seemed to display. His imagination had been more perceptible than his learning—*now*, every subject on which we conversed elicited hoards of knowledge, always extensive and often minute—of which perhaps he himself had been previously unconscious. It is a beautiful sight, even in the midst of its melancholy, the gradual passing away of one of the better order of souls—the passions lulled as the mind awakens, and a thousand graces of fortitude and gentleness called forth by the infirmities of the declining frame. The character assumes a more intellectual, a more ethereal complexion; and our love is made a loftier quality by our admiration, while it is softened by our pity.

Full of these reflections I arrived at the house of my dying friend. “My master, sir,” said the old servant, “has passed but a poor night; he seems in low spirits this morning, and I think he will be glad to see you, for he has inquired repeatedly what o’clock it was, as if time passed heavily with him.” The old man wiped his eyes as he spoke, and I followed him into L——’s study. The countenance of the invalid was greatly changed even since I last saw him. The eyes seemed more sunken, and the usual flush of his complaint had subsided into a deep but transparent paleness. I took his hand, and he shook his head gently as I did so. “The goal is nearly won!” said he faintly, but with a slight smile. I did not answer, and he proceeded after a short pause—“It has been said that ‘life is a jest;’ it is a very sorry one, and like bad jests in general, its dulness is the greater as we near the close. At the end of a long illness it is only the dregs of a man’s spirit that are left him. People talk of the moral pangs that attend the death-bed of a sinner—as well might they talk of the physical weakness of a dying wrestler. The mental and the physical powers are too nearly allied for us fairly to speculate on the fidelity of the one while the other declines. Happy in my case that the endurance if not the elasticity of my mind lingers with me to the last! I was looking over some papers this morning which were full of my early visions, aspirations of fame, and longings after earthly immortality. I am fortunate that time is not

allowed me to sacrifice happiness to these phantoms. A man's heart must be very frivolous if the possession of fame rewards the labour to attain it. For the worst of reputation is that it is not palpable or present—we do not feel, or see, or taste it. People praise us behind our backs, but we hear them not; few before our faces: and who is not suspicious of the truth of such praise? What *does* come before us perpetually in our career of honours is the blame, not praise—the envy, not esteem. We ask the disciple and we find the persecutor.”

“Ay,” said I, “but after a little while the great man learns to despise the abuse which is not acknowledged to be just.”

“In proportion as *he despises blame*,” answered L—, “*he will despise praise*—if the one give no pain, the other will give no pleasure; and thus the hunt after honours will be but a life of toil without a reward, and entail the apathy of obscurity without its content.”

A. But consider, there is the reward of our own heart which none can take away—our proud self-esteem, and if you will, our fond appeal to the justice of an after-age.

L. But our self-esteem, our self-applause, may be equally, perhaps more securely, won in obscurity than in fame; and as to posterity, what philosophical, what moderately wise man can seriously find pleasure for the present in reflecting on the praises he can never hear? No, say what we will, you may be sure that ambition is an error:—its wear and tear of heart are never recompensed—it steals away the freshness of life—it deadens its vivid and social enjoyments—it shuts our soul to our own youth—and we are old ere we find that we have made a fever and a labour of our raciest years. There is, and we cannot deny it, a certain weary, stale, unprofitable flatness in all things appertaining to life; and what is worse, the more we endeavour to lift ourselves from the beaten level, the keener is our disappointment. It is thus that true philosophers have wisely told us to cultivate our reason rather than our feelings—for reason reconciles us to the daily things of existence—our feelings teach us to yearn after the Far, the Difficult, the Unseen,

“Clothing the palpable and the familiar
With golden exhalations from the dawn.”

But "the golden exhalations" vanish as noon advances;—our fancies are the opium of our life, the rapture and the vision—the languor and the anguish. But what, when we come deeply to consider of it—what a singular fatality is that which makes it unwise to cultivate our divinest emotions! We bear within us the seeds of greatness; but suffer them to spring up, and they overshadow both our sense and our happiness! Note the errors of mankind; how mysteriously have they arisen from the desire to be higher than we are! As the banyan tree soars aloft only to return to the mire—we would climb to the heaven, and find ourselves once more in the dust. Thus, looking up to the starred and solemn heavens, girt with the vast solitudes of unpeopled Nature—hearkening to the "live thunder," or suffering the mighty winds to fill their hearts with a thousand mysterious voices—mankind in the early time felt the inspiration of something above them: they bowed to the dark *afflatus*; they nourished the unearthly dream; and they produced—what?—SUPERSTITION! The darkest and foulest of moral Demons sprang from their desire to shape forth a God, and their successors made earth a Hell by their efforts to preserve the mysteries and repeat the commands of Heaven!

How beautiful, how high were those desires in man's heart which lifted it up to the old Chaldean falsehoods of Astrology! Who can read at this day of those ancient seers, striving to win from the loveliest and most glorious objects given to our survey, the secrets of empires, the prodigies of Time, the destinies of the Universe, without a solemn and kindling awe, an admiration at the vast conception even of so unwise a dream? Who first thought of conning the great page of Heaven?—who first thought that in those still, and cold, and melancholy orbs, our chronicles were writ? Whoever it was, his must have been a daring and unearthly soul; but the very loftiness of its faculties produced ages of delusion, and priestcraft, and error to the world. Leave for one moment the chain of the petty KNOWN—give wings to the Mind—let the aspiration loose—and what may be the result? How rarely gain!—how rarely aught but a splendid folly! As the fireworks that children send forth against a dark sky, our ambition burns, and mounts, and illumines for one moment the dim vault of the uncomprehended space, but falls to the earth spoiled of

its lustre—brilliant, but useless—ascending, but exploring not—a toy to all, and a light to none.

“There is one ambition,” said I, “which you do not mean thus to characterise—the ambition of philanthropy—the desire more

‘To raise the wretched than to rise;’

and you, I know, who believe in human perfectibility, can appreciate at its proper value that order of ambition.”

“You kindly remind me,” said L—, “of one of the greatest consolations with which a man, who has any warmth or benevolence of heart, can depart this world—the persuasion that he leaves his species gradually advancing towards that completer virtue and more catholic happiness which his noblest ambition could desire for them. Night, according to the old Egyptian creed, is the dark Mother of all things; as ages leave her, they approach the light. That which the superficial dread, is in reality the Vivifier of the world—I mean the everlasting Spirit of Change. And, figuring forth unconsciously to themselves this truth, the Egyptians, we are told by Porphyry, represented their demons as floating upon the waters—for ever restless and evoking the great series of Mutabilities. Yet who lightly cares to take upon himself the fearful responsibility of shaking the throned Opinions of his generation, knowing that centuries may pass before the good that is worked shall compensate for the evil done? This fear, this timidity of conscience it is, that makes us cowards to the Present, and leaves the great souls that should lead on Reform inert and sluggish, while the smaller spirits, the journeymen of time, just creep up inch by inch to what Necessity demands, leaving the world ages and ages behind that far goal which the few, in heart, and eye, and speculation, have already reached.”

4. One of the strange things that happen daily is this: men who the most stir the lives of others, lead themselves the most silent and tranquil life. It is curious to read how Kant, who set the mind of Germany on fire with the dim light of mysticism, himself lived on from day to day, the mere creature of his habits, and performing somewhat of the operations of the horologe, that, in its calm regularity, leads the blind million to portion out in new and wild dreams the short span of existence. So with phi-

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losophers and poets generally—how wonderful the contrast between the quiet of their existence and the turbid effects they produce! This, perhaps secretly to ourselves, makes the great charm in visiting the calm and still retreats from whence the oracles of the world have issued—the hermitage of Ermenonville—the fortress of Wartenburg; the one where Rousseau fed his immortal fancies—the other whence burst, from the fiery soul of Luther, the light that yet lives along the world:—what reflections must the silence and the mouldering stone awaken, as we remember the vivid and overflowing hearts of the old inhabitants! Plato and his Cave are, to all ages, the type and prophecy of the Philosopher and his Life.

L. Few, my friend, think of all the lofty and divine hopes that the belief in immortality opens to us. One of the purest of these is the expectation of a more entire intelligence of the great gift of conversing with all who have lived before us—of questioning the past ages and unravelling their dark wisdom. How much in every man's heart dies away unuttered! How little of what the sage knows does the sage promulgate! How many chords of the lyre within the poet's heart have been dumb to the world's ear! All this untold, uncommunicated, undreamed-of store of wisdom and of harmony, it may be the privilege of our immortality to learn. The best part of genius, the world often knows not—the Plato buries much of his lore within his Cave—and this, the High Unknown, is our heritage. "With these thoughts," continued L—, "you see how easy it is for the parting soul to beautify and adorn Death! Nay, if we begin betimes, we can learn to make the prospect of the grave the most seductive of human visions—by little and little we wean from its contemplation all that is gloomy and abhorrent—by little and little we hve therein all the most pleasing of our dreams. As the neglected genius whispers to his muse, 'Posterity shall know thee, and *thou* shalt live when I am no more,' we find in this hallowed and all-promising future, a recompense for every mortification, for every disappointment in the present. It is the belief of the Arabs, that to the earliest places of human worship there clings a guardian sanctity—there the wild bird rests not, there the wild beast may not wander; it is the blessed spot on which the eye of God dwells, and which man's deepest

memories preserve. As with the earliest places of worship, so is it with the latest haven of repose—as with the spot where our first imperfect adoration was offered up, our first glimpses of divinity indulged, so should it be with that where our full knowledge of the Arch-Cause begins, and we can pour forth a gratitude no longer checked and darkened by the troubles and cares of earth. Surely if any spot in the world be sacred, it is that small green mound in which grief ceases, and from which, if the harmonies of creation, if the voice within our hearts, if the impulse which makes man so easy a believer in revelation,—if these mock and fool us not with an everlasting lie, we spring up on the untiring wings of a pangless and seraphic life—those whom we loved, around us; the aspirations that we nursed, fulfilled; our nature, universal intelligence; our atmosphere, eternal love!”

Some time afterwards, observing a volume of Plato on the table, our conversation fell upon that divine philosopher, and on his dialogue of the “Phædo” in particular.

“Of all the Dialogues of Plato,” said L—, “the ‘Phædo’ has been perhaps the most read, and may be considered the most interesting. It is the most interesting, partly from its accurate account of the last hours of Socrates, and partly from our absorbing curiosity to know the opinions of the wisest of the ancients respecting the immortality of the soul. Perhaps there is no part of our studies which bequeaths a more delightful and enduring memory. It lives within us like the recollection of some southern landscape, in which the colouring of the heavens forms the prominent beauty—which we were too intoxicated to examine in detail, but in which every separate feature is confused and blended into one dim and delicious whole. Each of Plato’s Dialogues has more or less of the dramatic spirit—but the ‘Phædo’ is the most dramatic of all. It is a picture of extraordinary sweetness and grandeur, in which the figures are distinct and lifelike. We see the crowd of disciples, some Athenian, some Foreigners, waiting in the early morning of their master’s last day by the gates of the prison—the ship of Theseus* having now returned—its stern crowned with flowers—as in token at once of sacrifice and festival. Within, while they wait, the magistrates

* No criminal could be executed until its return.

are freeing Socrates from his bonds. There they stand, mournful but not despondent—exalted by the former teachings of their guide—influenced by ‘that wonderful passion,’—‘*not* of pity,’ which Plato has so beautifully described—in which grief at their master’s death is mingled with all the sweet and musical consolings inspired by his past converse. The gaoler appears—the door opens—they are with Socrates. The manner in which, after dismissing the loud sorrow of Xantippe, the conversation glides into its glorious topics, is singularly natural and simple. We see Socrates ‘sitting upright on his bed,’ and moralising gaily on the relief from his fetters—till one thought begetting another, he comes to his celebrated explanation of the causes why one ‘who has rightly studied philosophy should be bold when about to die.’ The little incidental and graphic touches with which, here and there, Plato breaks the dialogue, render it peculiarly living and effective; and the individuality of Socrates, in that mixture of easy gaiety and lofty thought, which divides his listeners between weeping and laughter—that patient confidence with which he is wont to hear objections—and the art with which he draws on the speaker to answer himself, make the character as distinctly and appropriately marked as a personage in one of Shakspeare’s plays. The utter want of any rhetorical attempt to move an unworthy compassion—the plain and homely simplicity with which the whole tragedy is told, from the time when, stroking the limb which the fetters had galled, he observes smilingly how the painful had been supplied by pleasurable sensations—or his caressingly touching the long hair of the supposed narrator, who sat on a low stool beside him—to the close, when, returned from the bath—after embracing for the last time his children, he sits down again amongst his friends, and ‘did not speak much afterwards:’ ‘and it was now near the setting of the sun;’* the weeping

- * “How watched his better sons the farewell ray,
That closed their murdered sage’s latest day!
Not yet—not yet—Sol pauses on the hill,
The precious hour of parting lingers still,” &c.

It is a pity that Byron injured the whole of this beautiful allusion by the epithet in the following line—

“But sad his light to *agonizing* eyes.

There was no agony in the tears that his pupils shed for Socrates. “The

servant of the magistrate, coming to bid him farewell—the request of Socrates to bid them bring the poison—the answer of Crito, ‘Nay, the sun yet lingers on the mountains’—the undaunted gaze of Socrates on the countenance of his executioner (so untranslatably expressed in the word *ταυρηδόν*)* as he took the fatal draught;—the sudden burst of sorrow from his disciples, which a few words from the dying man causes them to blush for;—the melancholy walk to and fro that narrow cell, for the better operation of the poison—the homely expression, and ‘when he felt his limbs grow heavy, he laid himself down to die;’—the portrait of the executioner pressing his foot strongly and asking if he felt the pressure, of which, alas! he was unconscious;—the gradual progress of the numbing potion from the feet to the nobler parts, as Socrates himself points out to those around his bed, how the limbs stiffen and grow cold—adding, in that phrase of unconscious pathos, ‘When it reaches *my heart* I shall leave you;’—that last and mystic command (which the later Platonists have endeavoured to explain as an emblematic desire of purification and healing) to sacrifice to Æsculapius;—the inquiry of Crito, ‘Hast thou no other bidding?’—the quiet sorrow of what follows—‘To this he made no reply, but after he had been a short time still, he moved, and the man covered him, and his eyes grew fixed. And Crito perceived it, and closed his eyes and mouth.—This, Echecrates, was the end of our companion;’—the whole of this picture is, I say, so great a masterpiece of truth and tenderness—the presentation of so sublime a spectacle, that in itself it would render the ‘Phædo’ one of the most valuable of the possessions we derive from the Golden Past. But how much more thrilling and divine it becomes, when this, the last scene of such a life, is coloured with all the hopes and auguries of the departing soul—when the passage from this world is smoothed by angust conjectures on the world to be—and the Sage lavishes his wisdom on the glorious aphorism that to die is to be immortal!

“We do not wish to disturb the thoughts which this

sadness was,” as Plato says, “not wholly displeasing.” The death of a man thoroughly great and good does not allow the terror and the prostration of agony.

* [Fiercely, with the glare of a bull, *torvo vultu*.]

dialogue bequeaths us, by criticising the details—we would rather number its recollection amongst our feelings than submit it coldly to the test of our reasonings. Alas! if we do the latter, the effect begins gloomily to fade away. For I must own that, amidst all the poetry of the allusions—amidst all the ingenuity of the arguments—I feel when I fix the mind rather than the imagination or the heart upon the conclusions of the Great Heathen, that they fail to convince. Almost every argument he uses for the immortality of man is equally applicable to the humblest of the brutes—the least visible of the animalculæ in a drop of water. Such, for instance, as this, which is the least obscure, perhaps, of all his propositions, and which, nevertheless, is almost a scholastic frivolity. ‘A contrary cannot receive a contrary, nor the contrary of that which it introduces. What is that which, when in the body, renders the body living?—The soul. Soul therefore introduces life to that which it occupies. What is the contrary of life?—Death. But the soul cannot receive the contrary of what it introduces—it cannot therefore receive death. But what do we call that which does not receive death?—Immortal.’ Such is one among the most intelligible arguments of the wisest of the heathens. Can we wonder when we are told that Socrates and Plato made but few converts in Athens to the immortality of the soul? Adopt the argument, and the fly at the window, the spider which is now watching it—nay, the very tree waving before us green and living, have, equally with myself, that which introduces life, and cannot receive the contrary to that which it introduces—its soul is therefore immortal as my own.

“But a graver objection to the whole reasoning is, that the question is begged, when Socrates affirms that that which gives life is the soul. This is the exact point at issue between the materialist and ourselves. What can be so bewildering as the more subtle refinements about ‘harmony’ and ‘parity,’ and the previous existence of the soul—on which last, however, the Sage’s arguments are less vague than they are with respect to its existence hereafter, and which yet, if true, would destroy the whole blessing of Immortality: for if the soul has existed before it entered our body—and if our seeming acquisitions are rather dim reminiscences of what we knew before—if, as the intoxicating poetry of the Platonist has supposed, the delight

that follows upon our discovery of a truth is nothing more than the recognition—the refinding, as it were, something formerly familiar and allied to us—where is that perfect identity which can alone render a new existence a blessing that we ourselves can feel? What comfort is it to me to think that my soul may live again under other shapes; but *I*—my sentient faculty—my memory and perception, not feel the renewed existence? This would not be a continuance of myself, but a lapse into another as distinct from myself—as Socrates from Newton. No—there is nothing in the ‘Phædo’ that could convince a modern unbeliever; but there is every thing that can charm and delight one who already believes—who desires only to embellish his belief with beautiful thoughts,*—and who from the Pisgah of his conviction looks down on those who have strayed, erring, but with faith, over the glimmering and uncertain wastes of the past Desert. All our later upholders of Natural Religion have, even to the sceptics in Revealed, been more successful in their reasonings than this lofty Ancient. It has been among the peculiar blessings of Revealed Religion that it has led men more logically and deliberately to the arguments for Natural Theology. Its very enemies have, in dissenting from its principles, confirmed its most grand conclusions. Revelation made the eternity of the soul a grave and settled doctrine, which scholars could not bandy about according to their fantasies. It attracted the solemn attention of sages to all the arguments for and against it. And out of a thousand disputes have proceeded the reasonings upon which it has found its basis. When Christ said, ‘I AM

* One source of great interest in the “Phædo,” as indeed in all the writings of Plato, is to trace therein the germs of modern articles of philosophic or Christian faith. For instance, Reid’s assertion of the inherent disposition to Truth or “instinctive prescience of human actions which makes us rely on the testimony of our fellow-creatures” has been preceded by the “Phædo”—though the remark is intended to apply to the pre-existence of the soul † and the fantastic notion that learning is but reminiscence. “The truth of this,” says Cebes, “is manifested by a most beautiful argument. Men, when interrogated properly, will speak of every thing just as it is—could they do this unless science and right reason resided (or were inherent) in them?” In another part of “Phædo” you may trace the outline of the Catholic purgatory.

† A doctrine as old, at least as Pherecydes, who, first of the Greeks, taught that the soul pre-existed from eternity—Socrates taught little or nothing that was absolutely new. Alas! who has?

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD;' he uttered one of the sublimest of his prophecies. His faith has called forth the countless luminaries of Truth; not only the Reformers, who in examining Religion established Liberty, but the Philosophers who, in advancing to the realm of Doubt, have extended the empire of Thought—they penetrated lands which we have since converted—they discovered the shadowy regions of Uncertainty since colonised with Truths: and Darkness has produced our guides and constellations, as Night awakes the Stars. Instead of checking Philosophy, Faith has made it yet more searching and severe. If speculations indeed remain which our understanding cannot solve—if the Origin of Evil yet perplex and sadden us—if we cannot guess how the soul enters nor why departs—nor know the secret of 'the harmony of the lyre; '*—we can still fall back upon the resting-places we have gained, and not suffer our ignorance to be the judge because it fails to become the witness. Satisfied that if Faith has its enigmas, Disbelief is yet more obscure, we learn the Philosophy of Hope,—and, when the soul shrinks back, appalled, from the wilderness of space around it, and the dazzle of the sun, we may trust yet that He who gifted it with its wings may hereafter increase its strength, and guide its wanderings, and enable it to face the intolerable lustre which now blinds its gaze. Once convinced that there is a God, and we annihilate Despair!—we may still have our doubts and our desires—our sorrows and our cares—but it is enough to know that we are destined to survive them. And when we are weary of our vain wanderings, we remember that Thought can find its home with God, and that it is on a Father's bosom that we hush ourselves to rest!"

In discourses of this sort, the day wore to its close, and when will the remembrance of that day ever depart from me? It seemed to me, as we sat by the window, the sun sinking through the still summer air, the leaves at rest, but how full of life, the motes dancing in the beam, the birds with their hymns of love, and every now and then the chirp of the grasshopper—

"That evening reveller who makes
His life an infancy and sings his fill;"—

* The beautiful simile in the "Phædo."

it seemed to me, as we so sat, and, looking upon the hushed face of our mother Nature, I listened to the accents of that wild and impassioned wisdom, so full of high conjecture, and burning vision, and golden illustration, which belonged to him for whom life was closing, as if I could have fancied that the world was younger by some two thousand years, and that it was not one of this trite and dull age's children that was taking his farewell of life, but rather one of the enthusiasts of that day when knowledge was both a passion and a dream, when the mysteries of the universe and the life-to-come were thought the most alluring of human themes, and when in the beautiful climates of the West, the sons of Wisdom crept out to die among the trees they had peopled with divinities, and yielded their own spirits to the Great Soul of which they were a part, and which their mysterious faith had made the Life and Ruler of the world.*

And now the sun sank, and

"Maro's shepherd star
Watched the soft silence with a loving eye." †

"Do you remember," said L——, "a story in one of the old English Chronicles, how a bird flew into the king's chamber, when the king was conversing with some sage upon the nature of the soul? 'Behold!' said the sage, 'it is like that bird while within this room; you can note its flight and motions, but you know not whence it came ere it entered, nor can ye guess whither it shall fly when it leaves this momentary lodging.'"

It chanced, somewhat curiously, that, as L—— spoke, a small bird—I know not of what name or tribe—suddenly alighted on the turf beneath the window, and though all its fellow-songsters were already hushed, poured forth a long, loud, sweet lay, that came, in the general silence, almost startlingly upon the ear. "Poor bird!" said L——, musingly, "it is thy farewell to one who, perhaps, has given thee food for thy little ones. And," continued he, after a short pause—and lifting up his eyes, he gazed long

* But Phornutus, by Jupiter, understands the Soul of the world, he writing thus concerning him, *ὅσπερ δὲ ἡεῖς*, &c. † "As we ourselves are governed by a soul, so hath the world, in like manner, a soul that containeth it, and this is called Zeus, being the cause of life to all things that live," &c.

—CUDWORTH, vol. i. p. 529.

† "Milton," a poem.

‡ [Just as towards, &c.]

and earnestly around the scene, now bathed in all the darkening but tender hues of the summer night—"and shall I be ungrateful to that Power which has, since my boyhood, fed my Thoughts—the Wanderers of the heart—have I no farewell for that Nature whom, perhaps, I behold for the last time? O, unseen Spirit of Creation! that watchest over all things—the desert and the rock, no less than the fresh water bounding on like a hunter on his path, when his heart is in his step—or the valley girded by the glad woods, and living with the yellow corn—to me, thus sad and baffled, thou hast ministered as to the happiest of thy children!—thou hast whispered tidings of unutterable comfort to a heart which the world sated while it deceived! thou gavest me a music, sweeter than that of palaces, in the mountain wind!—thou badest the flowers and the common grass smile up to me as children to the face of their father!—Like the eye of a woman first loved to the soul of the poet, was the face of every soft and never-silent star to me! Nature! my mother Nature! as the infant in the harsh slavery of schools pines for home, I yearned within the dark walls of cities, and amidst the hum of unfamiliar men, for thy sweet embrace, and thy bosom whereon to lay my head, and weep wild tears at my will! I thank thee, Nature, that thou art round and with me to the last! Not in the close thoroughfares of toil and traffic—not tethered to a couch, whence my eyes asking for thee, would behold only those dim walls which are the dying man's worst dungeon, or catch through the lattice the busy signs and crowded tenements of the unsympathising herd;—not *thus* shall my last sigh be rendered up to the Great Fount of Life! To the mystic moment when the breath flutters and departs, thy presence will be round me, and the sentiment of thy freedom bathe my soul like a fresh air! Farewell thou, and thy thousand ministrants and children!—every leaf that quivers on the bough—every dew-drop that sparkles from the grass—every breeze that animates the veins of earth, are as friends, that I would rather know around my death-bed than the hollow hearts and ungenial sympathies of my kind! O Nature, farewell! if we are reunited, can I feel in a future being thy power, and thy beauty, and thy presence, more intensely than I have done in this?"

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When I was about to take leave of L—— for the night, he asked me, in a meaning voice, to stay with him a little longer: "The fact is," said he, "that Dr. —— implies a doubt whether I shall see another day; so be with me, at least till I fall asleep. I mean," added he, smiling, "not in the metaphorical, but the literal sense of the word."

Accordingly, when he retired for the night, I sat by his bedside, and we continued to converse, for he wished it, though but by fits and starts: he gave me several instructions as to his burial, and as to various little bequests, not mentioned in his formal testament. While indifferent to the companionship of men, he had never been ungrateful for their affection: the least kindness affected him sensibly, and he was willing in death to show that he had not forgotten it. Indeed I have observed, that the more we live out of the world, the more little courtesies, such as in the crowd are unheeded, are magnified into favours: true that the same process of exaggeration occurs in respect to petty affronts or inconsiderate slights. The heart never attains the independence of the mind.

Before the window, which looked out into the garden, the dark tops of the trees waved mournfully to and fro; and above, in deep relief, was the sky, utterly cloudless, and alive with stars. "My eyes are very heavy," said L——; "close the curtains round my head." I did so, and crept softly into the next room, where the nurse sat dozing in a large chair by the fireside.

"Does he sleep, sir?" said she, waking up as I approached.

"He will shortly," said I: "he seems inclined to it."

"Poor gentleman! he will soon be out of his sufferings," said the nurse; and she therewith took a huge pinch of snuff.

Yes! this is the world's notion. With what wondrous ingenuity they shift off the pain of regret! A friend, a brother, a husband, nay a son dies—they thank God he is out of his afflictions! In one sense they are right. They make the best of their own short summer, and do not ask the cloud to stay longer than suffices to call up the flowers

or refresh the soil. Yet this is a narrow view of the subject of death. A bright genius disappears, a warm heart is stilled, and we think only (when we console ourselves) of the escape of the individual from his bed of pain. But ought we not to think of the loss that the world, that our whole race, sustains? I believe so. How many thoughts which might have preached conviction to the universe will be stricken for ever dumb by the early death of one being! What services to earth might the deep knowledge, the ardent spirit of L—— have effected! But this we never think of. "Poor gentleman!" quoth the nurse, "he will soon be out of his sufferings!" and therewith she took a huge pinch of snuff.—What self-comforters we are!

"He is a good gentleman!" said she again, turning round to the fire; "and so fond of dumb animals. Cæsar, sir, the dog Cæsar, is at the foot of the bed, as usual?—ay, I warrant he lies there, sir, as still as a mouse. I am sure them creturs know when we are sick or not. Ah! sir, how the dog will take on, when——" and the nurse, breaking off, applied again to her snuff-box.

I did not feel at home in this conversation, and I soon stole again into the next room. What a stillness there was in it! It seemed palpable. Stillness is not silent, at least to the heart. I walked straight up to the bed. L——'s hand was flung over the pillow. I felt it gently; the pulse was almost imperceptibly low, but it fluttered nevertheless. I was about to drop the hand, when L—— half turned round, and that hand gently pressed my own. I heard a slight sigh, and fancying he was awake, I bent over to look into his face. The light from the window came full upon it, and I was struck—appalled, by the exceeding beauty of the smile that rested on the lips. But those lips had fallen from each other! I pressed the pulse again. No—the fluttering was gone. I started away with an unutterable tightness at my heart. I moved to the door, and called (but under my breath) to the nurse. She came quickly; yet I thought an hour had passed before she crossed the threshold. We went once more to the bed—and there, by his master's face, sat the poor dog. He had crept softly up from his usual resting-place; and when he saw us draw aside the curtain, he looked at us so wistfully, that—no, I cannot go on!—There is a religion in a good man's death that we cannot babble to all the world!

ASMODEUS AT LARGE.

AUTHOR'S NOTE TO "ASMODEUS AT LARGE."

[Appended to the series on its original publication in the *New Monthly*, but prefixed to the work on its separate publication in Philadelphia.]

As it is possible that with this first part the fiction of "Asmodeus at Large" may terminate, and as it is highly probable, at least, that it will not for some time be continued, we may as well say a few words on the design and object of the work. Although a part of a series, this first Book is a whole in itself;—its moral is complete. The more ingenious reader may, perhaps, already have perceived, that, while adapted to this miscellany by constant allusions to real and temporary events, a Metaphysical meaning runs throughout the characters and the story. In the narrator is embodied the SATIETY which is of the world; in Asmodeus is the principle of vague EXCITEMENT in which Satiety always seeks for relief. The extravagant adventures,—the rambling from the ideal to the commonplace—from the flights of the imagination to the trite affairs and petty pleasures of the day—are the natural results of Excitement without an object. A fervid, though hasty, PASSION succeeds at last, and Asmodeus appears no more, because, in Love, all vague excitement is merged in absorbing and earnest emotion. The passion is ill-fated; but in its progress it is attempted to be shown, that, *however* it might have terminated, it *could* not have been productive of happiness. It was begun without prudence, and continued without foresight. The heart, once jaded, rushes even into love, from a principle of despair; and exacting too much from novelty, relapses into its former weariness, when the novelty is no more. No flowers can live long on a soil thoroughly exhausted. The doom of Satiety is to hate self, yet ever to be alone.

ASMODEUS AT LARGE.

— • — No. I.

A Visit to a Quack Doctor.—The Mysterious Voice.—Asmodeus introduces himself.—The reason why the Doctor's lotions were so powerful.—The Demon's offer.—His liberator's reserve.—The Devil's visit.—The advantages of a good exterior.—Our severities to the shabby.—Myself and Asmodeus go to the Play.—Remarks on the English Drama.—The Garrick Club.—Our frankness in sinning.—Anecdote of a damned Farce.—Our Actresses.—The difficulty of teaching one of them to be diffident.—Braham's improvement.—Trip to France.—Dialogue on the Reform Bill.—On Satirical Poetry.—Its decline.—Lays for the Lords.—Taurobolad.—Tale of Tucuman.—The Devil grows metaphysical.—Apologises.—Apostrophe to Boulogne.—The Spirit of Change.—Difference of excitement in England and France.—Our moral condition compared to our soil.—Paris.—The change in its Salons.—Chateaubriand and his pamphlet.—Ignorance of the English on Foreign Literature.—The Rocher de Cancalc.

I PUT on my hat, and walked at once to the Doctor's house. "Yes," said I, musingly, "I am certainly in a consumption. I may as well, like Colonel Jones, leave my poor remains to the surgeons at once, and enjoy the newspaper credit of my generosity before I die. The cholera, however, which is terror to others, is consolation to me. If I were not dying of a consumption, I should certainly die of the cholera; it is something to escape six bottles of *cajeput*,* and a lamp of spirits of wine between the sheets, by way of a steam bath. Nevertheless," I resumed, after a pause, and I buttoned up my coat as I spoke, "Nevertheless, consumption is a slow and heavy road out of the world. Short journeys are the pleasantest, and it is the greatest of earthly bores to hear oneself styled for eight months 'the interesting invalid.' I will try then this great operator with a cheerful confidence. If he cannot rub me into health, he will rub me a little sooner into my grave. Next to a long life, what blessing like a quick death!"

* [The volatile, green, irritating oil, obtained from the East Indian tree called the *melaleuca cajaputi*, then widely famed for its virtues as a remedy for cholera.]

With this aphorism I knocked at my quack's door, and was admitted. A visit to a quack is a very pleasurable excitement. There is something piquant in the disdain for prudence with which we deliver ourselves up to that illegitimate sportsman of human lives, who kills us without a qualification. There is a delicious titillation in a large demand upon our credulity; we like to expect miracles in our own proper person, and we go to the quack from exactly the same feelings with which our ancestors went to the wizard. In what age has not the human mind its darling superstition? It so happened, that I was the last visitant that morning to "Nature's Grand Restorer." One after one my predecessors in the waiting-room dropped into the Doctor's study, and out of the Doctor's house, and at last I found myself alone. While I was indulging in a reverie and a patent chair, I was suddenly aroused by a low clear voice in the room, uttering these words—"We meet then again." I started. The voice seemed feminine. I looked round. No one was present—not even a stray article of woman's dress betrayed that a woman had been there. "It must have been in the street," said I, and re-settled myself in the patent chair.

"What!" said the voice again, "will you not speak to me?"

"Who's there?" cried I, beginning to feel frightened, for I thought it was the soul of a quacked woman! I looked round again. I walked through the apartment. I peeped under the sofa. Nought living could I behold; it was indeed *vox et preterea nihil*. "He has rubbed away all but the lady's voice," said I to myself, "but *that* defies him!"

"You seem puzzled," quoth the voice again.

"You say the truth, Ma'am; yet I question whether I ought to be. A voice without a woman may be a little strange, it is true; but the real wonder would be a woman without a voice!"

"Those jests on the loquacity of the sex," replied my invisible communicant, "have certainly the advantage of novelty. It must be confessed that your wit is very original."

"You have a turn for irony," said I; "no wonder that a gentlewoman so little incommoded by the corporeal, should be inclined to the sprightly."

"You mistake," quoth the airy tongue, "the quality of the person you address. I am no woman, I assure you, though my voice has, I allow, something feminine in its tones."

"What are you then?"

"A Devil!"

"*C'est la même chose!*" said I, going back to my chair very much disappointed.

"Pooh!" said the voice indignantly, "there is no time to lose! The door will be opened presently; you will be summoned into the Doctor's study, and we may never meet each other again."

"That would be a great hardship indeed," said I, "if you have described yourself truly."

"Pooh!" again cried the voice: "there speaks the most damnable of human errors. And so you, poor mortal worms, really suppose that we gentlemen devils intend to admit you into our circle when you quit your vulgar societies here! No, no—we visit you in this world, but never in the next, just as your great people visit folks in the country whom they never receive in their town-houses."

"You are discourteous, Mr. Devil, *de bon ton*; but I think we can make ourselves quite as comfortable without you."

"Bah!" replied the Devil. "You would insinuate that you cannot be tormented without us. Absurd; it is your own passions that torment you; those are our deputies, and while you think in our regions below we are actively torturing you, we are sitting quietly in our drawing-rooms playing at *rouge et noir*, and leave you to torture each other. Envy, jealousy, fear, and repentance—these can play the devil with you very handsomely, without our assistance. But a truce to explanation. Time presses for decision. Know that I am the devil Asmodeus, whose adventures with Don Cleofas you know so well. At that time I had the pleasure of making your acquaintance."

"Signor Don Asmodeus," said I, interrupting the Devil, somewhat briskly, "you do me too much honour; I have had cares and crosses enough in life to write old age in my heart; but in mere years, the vulgar computations of time, I am not quite so antient as you would allege; *sacre diantre!* according to you, I should be about one hundred and ninety-five!"

"Mistake not!" returned the Devil, "at that time you existed in another shape."

"Aha! you are a Pythagorean then! I hope my old form enjoyed better health than my present one."

"That is a secret," said the Devil, mysteriously; "I cannot tell you who or what you were. Transmigration is not a thing to be babbled about; those fellows who pretended in antient times to remember their former selves, were monstrous impostors, I assure you."

"I easily believe it; but granting our old acquaintance, for my memory certainly cannot contradict you; what is it that Signor Don Asmodeus wishes me to do?"

"Mount that chair, and look on the shelf to the right of the fireplace. You will see a bottle of lotion."

"Ah! I see it now; and you are at present within that bottle!"

"Exactly; that d—d Quack in the next room, when he made war against mankind, easily persuaded me to enter into partnership with him; but faith, the rogue decoyed me one bright morning into this bottle of lotion, and there I have been caged ever since."

"What, then, it is your presence, I suppose, that gives so strong a power to the lotion?"

"Just so: You have no idea how the water a devil bathes in can blister the skin; it is from this bottle that the Doctor fills his smaller receptacles in the next room."

"You then are the great backrubber," cried I, in much horror; "you are the hole-maker, and the lady-destroyer!* and going to the Doctor is but another phrase for going to the Devil!"

"Do not reproach me now," said the demon, in a melancholy voice, "I suffer myself, I assure you, in this infernal sea of cantharides, as much as the creatures I destroy. Willingly would I be released from my present confinement, and if you have pity either for devil or man, you will take me out of the Doctor's possession. Fortunate, indeed, was

* [The allusion here made was to a then notorious medical empiric, one John St. John Long, who, on the 21st August, 1830, was condemned for the manslaughter of Miss Cushin, and a few months later, on the 19th February, 1831, was acquitted upon another similar charge of homicide. A year and a half after this first instalment of "Asmodeus at Large" had appeared in the January number of the new *Monthly Magazine* of 1832, St. John Long himself had played out the rubber of life, his death occurring on the 4th July, 1834.]

it for you that I recognised you as an old acquaintance ; to new debutants in this world, I am not suffered to demean myself by an introduction—that is left to demons of lower rank ; fortunate, I say, was it for you, or I should have clawed all the skin off your back before you knew what a deuce of a fellow had got hold of you.”

“ If I release you,” said I musingly, “ it will certainly be for the benefit of mankind ; but then you know—most philosophical Devil—that there is nothing in the world like an enlarged self-interest, and I want to make the best bargain I can with you also, for myself. Will you be to me the same Cicerone and companion that you were to Don Cleofas ? I am subject to fits of fearful despondency—I want an entertaining companion—I am too absent for women, and too gloomy for men ; but I think I could be excellent friends with a polite devil.”

“ All that I was to Don Cleofas, that will I be to you ! More than I was to Don Cleofas, I can be to you also ; for Don Cleofas was an idle young man, a mere student, just wise enough for a lover. He would have been incapable of understanding half the sights I should have wished to reveal to him ; and as to our discourses, they owe all their merit to that wittiest of eaves-droppers—Le Sage ; but you, Sir, are just the person—nay, never blush, on the honour of a gentleman—you are just the person I could take a pleasure in instructing. The past—the present—this world—a great portion of the other—all that now live—all that ever have lived—I can show you at your command. Nay, if you have the courage, we can take an occasional trip to the moon, or perform the grand tour of the *lactea via* ! What a pleasant way of passing this dull winter ! Then, too, I have a large acquaintance among the fairies, and I can let you into more secrets in that quarter, than Master Crofton Croker is well aware of. As to mortals—the highest—the fairest—the wisest—I can make you intimate with them all. You shall shoot with Charles X. at Holyrood—dine with the Duke of Reichstadt, and ask him if he remembers that he is the son of Napoleon. You shall sit on the woolsack with Brougham, and see me uncork the nonsense of Londonderry. You shall eat your fish at the *Rocher de Cancale*, when you incline to the gourmand ; and gaze on the moon from the shattered arches of the *Colosseum*, when you meditate the romantic !”

“ Your offers content me,” said I, less enthusiastically

than the Devil expected; "I accept them at once: the time indeed has passed since either luxury or romance had the power to charm; but I can still be amused, if no longer delighted. Come, then, shall I put you into my pocket, and carry you and your prison away?"

"No!" returned the Devil, "you must open the window, and throw the phial out upon the stones!"

"And you—"

"Will have the honour to be in waiting for you at your own rooms by the time you arrive there."

"But, Signor Don Asmodeus, there is no compact between us, you will please to recollect. I shall endorse no bills you may wish to present me, payable in the next world. I shall be happy to make your acquaintance in an honest way, but I cannot afford to lend you my soul."

"Bah!" said Asmodeus, "those bargains are obsolete; Hell must have been badly peopled at that time; now we have more souls than we know what to do with." Re-assured by this information, I opened the window, and threw the lotion on the pavement: I had scarcely done so, before the Doctor's bell rang, and I knew that it was my turn to be rubbed: my ardour for that personal experiment was, however, wonderfully abated; I doubted not but that the Doctor had other bottles equally calculated to play the devil with one. I seized my stick and gloves, brushed by the servant with an unintelligible mutter, and walked home to see if my new acquaintance was a gentleman of his word.

"A stranger, Sir, in the library," said my servant in opening the door.

"Indeed! what, a short, lame gentleman?"

"No, sir; middle-sized,—has very much the air of a lawyer or professional man."

I entered the room, and instead of the dwarf demon Le Sage described, I beheld a comely man seated at the table, with a high forehead, a sharp face, and a pair of spectacles on his nose. He was employed in reading the new novel of "The Usurer's Daughter."

"This cannot be the devil!" said I to myself; so I bowed, and asked the gentleman his business.

"Tush!" quoth my visitor; "and how did you leave the Doctor?"

"It is you, then!" said I; "you have grown greatly since you left Don Cleofas."

"Wars fatten our tribe," answered the Devil; "besides, shapes are optional with me, and in England men go by appearances more than they do abroad; one is forced to look respectable and portly; the Devil himself could not cheat your countrymen with a shabby exterior. Doubtless you observe that all the swindlers, whose adventures enliven your journals, are dressed 'in the height of fashion,' and enjoy 'a mild prepossessing demeanour.' Even the Cholera does not menace 'a gentleman of the better ranks;' and no bodies are burked with a decent suit of clothes on their backs. Wealth in all countries is the highest possible morality; but you carry the doctrine to so great an excess, that you scarcely suffer the poor man to exist at all. If he take a walk in the country, there's the Vagrant Act; and if he has not a penny to hire a cellar in town, he's snapped up by a *Burker*,* and sent off to the surgeons in a sack. It must be owned that no country affords such warnings to the spendthrift. You are one great moral against the getting rid of one's money."

On this, Asmodeus and myself had a long conversation; it ended in our dining together, (for I found him a social fellow, and fond of a broil in a quiet way,) and adjourning, in excellent spirits, to the theatre.

"Certainly," said the Devil, taking a pinch of snuff, "certainly your drama is wonderfully fine, it is worthy of a civilized nation; formerly you were contented with choosing actors among human kind, but what an improvement to go among the brute creation! think what a fine idea to have a whole play turn upon the appearance of a broken-backed lion! And so you are going to raise the drama by setting up a club; that's another exquisite notion! You hire a great house in the neighbourhood of the theatre; you call it the Garrick Club.† You allow actors and patrons to mix themselves and their negus there

* [William Burke, the first known perpetrator of this new species of murder, in which the victims were suffocated by pitch plasters or otherwise, and their remains afterwards sold to the surgeons for dissection, was hung on the 28th January, 1829, at Edinburgh. A fresh access of horror in the public mind in regard to burking had arisen on the 5th December, 1831, less than a month before this reference to the crime appeared in the *New Monthly*, by reason of the execution at the Old Bailey of the miscreants Bishop and Williams, for the murder, among many others, of a poor Italian boy named Carlo Ferrari.]

† [The Garrick Club was first established in 1831, at the house in which it long flourished, in King Street, Covent Garden.]

after the play; and this you call a design for exalting the drama. Certainly you English are a droll set; your expedients are admirable."

"My good Devil, any thing that brings actors and spectators together, that creates an *esprit de corps* among all who cherish the drama, is not to be sneered at in that inconsiderate manner."

"I sneer! you mistake me; you have adduced a most convincing argument—*esprit de corps*!—good! Your clubs certainly nourish sociality greatly; those little tables, with one sulky man before one sulky chop—those hurried nods between acquaintances—that monopoly of newspapers and easy chairs—all exhibit to perfection the cementing faculties of a club. Then, too, it certainly does an actor inestimable benefit to mix with lords and squires. Nothing more fits a man for his profession, than living with people who know nothing about it. Only think what a poor actor Kean is; you would have made him quite a different thing, if you had tied him to tame gentlemen in the 'Garrick Club.' He would have played 'Richard' in a much higher vein, I doubt not."

"Well," said I, "the stage is your affair at present, and doubtless you do right to reject any innovation."

"Why, yes," quoth the Devil, looking round; "we have a very good female supply in this quarter. But pray how comes it that the English are so candid in sin? Among all nations there is immorality enough, Heaven knows; but you are so delightfully shameless: if a crime is committed here, you can't let it 'waste its sweetness;' you thrust it into your papers forthwith; you stick it up on your walls; you produce it at your theatres; you chat about it as an agreeable subject of conversation; and then you cry out with a blush against the open profligacy abroad! This is one of those amiable contradictions in human nature that charm me excessively. You fill your theatres with ladies of pleasure—you fill your newspapers with naughty accounts—a robbery is better to you than a feast—and a good fraud in the city will make you happy for a week; and all this while you say: 'We are the people who send vice to Coventry, and teach the world how to despise immorality.' Nay, if one man commits a murder, your newspapers kindly instruct his associates how to murder in future, by a far safer method, A wretch kills a boy for

the surgeons, by holding his head under water: 'Silly dog!' cries the Morning Herald, 'why did not he clap a sponge dipped in prussic acid to the boy's mouth?'"

Here we were interrupted by a slight noise in the next box, which a gentleman had just entered. He was a tall man, with a handsome face and very prepossessing manner.

"That is an Author of considerable reputation," said my Devil, "quiet, though a man of wit, and with a heart, though a man of the world. Talking of the drama, he once brought out a farce, which had the good fortune to be damned. As great expectations had been formed of it, and the author's name had transpired; the unsuccessful writer rose the next morning with a hissing sound in his ears, and that leaning towards misanthropy, which you men always experience when the world has the bad taste to mistake your merits. 'Thank Fate, however,' said the Author, 'it is damned thoroughly—it is off the stage—I cannot be hissed again—in a few days it will be forgotten—meanwhile I will take a walk in the Park.' Scarce had the gentleman got into the street, before, lo! at a butcher's shop blazed the 'very head and front of his offending.' 'Second night of its appearance, the admired Farce of ———, by ———, Esq.' Away posts the Author to the Manager.

"'Good Heavens! Sir, my farce again! was it not thoroughly damned last night?'"

"'Thoroughly damned!' quoth the Manager, drily; 'we reproduce it, Sir—we reproduce it (with a knowing wink,) that the world, enraged at our audacity, may come here to damn it again!' So it is, you see! the love of money is the contempt of man: there's an aphorism for you! Let us turn to the stage. What actresses you have!—certainly you English are a gallant nation; you are wonderfully polite to come and see such horrible female performers! By the by, you observed when that young lady came on the stage, how timidly she advanced, how frightened she seemed. 'What modesty!' cry the audience; 'we must encourage her!' they clap, they shout, they pity the poor thing, they cheer her into spirits. Would you believe that the hardest thing the Manager had to do with her was to teach her that modesty. She wanted to walk on the stage like a grenadier, and it required fifteen lessons to make her be ashamed of herself. It is in these things that the

stage mimics the world, rather behind the scenes than before!

"Bless me, how Braham is improved!" cried a man with spectacles, behind me; "he acts now better than he sings!"

"Is it not strange," said Asmodeus, "how long the germ of a quality may remain latent in the human mind, and how completely you mortals are the creatures of culture? It was not till his old age that Braham took lessons in acting; some three times a week has he of late wended his way down to the comedian of Chapel Street, to learn energy and counterfeit warmth; and the best part of it is, that the spectators will have it that an Actor feels all he acts; as if Human Nature, wicked as it is, could feel Richard the Third every other night. I remember Mrs. Siddons had a majestic manner of extending her arm as she left the stage. 'What grace!' said the world, with tears in its eyes, 'what dignity! what a wonderful way of extending an arm! you see her whole soul is in the part!' The arm was in reality stretched impatiently out for a pinch from the snuff-box that was always in readiness behind the scenes."

It is my misfortune, Reader, to be rapidly bored. I cannot sit out a sermon, much less a play; amusement is the most tedious of human pursuits.

"You are tired of this, surely," said I to the Devil; "let us go!"

"Whither?" said Asmodeus.

"Why, 'tis a starlit night, let us ride over to Paris, and sup, as you promised, at the Rocher de Cancale."

"*Volontiers.*"

Away—away—away—into the broad still Heavens, the stars dancing merrily above us, and the mighty heart of the City beating beneath the dusky garment of night below.

"Let us look down," said Asmodeus; "what a wilderness of houses! shall I uncover the roofs for you, as I did for Don Cleofas; or rather, for it is an easier method, shall I touch your eyes with my salve of penetration, and enable you to see at once through the wall?"

"You might as well do so; it is pleasant to feel the power, though at present I think it superfluous; wherever I look, I can only see rogues and fools, with a stray honest man now and then, who is probably in prison."

Asmodeus touched my eyes with a green salve, which

he took out of an ivory box, and all at once, my sight being directed towards a certain palace, I beheld

* * * * *

"And what thought you of the last discussions on the Reform Bill?" quoth the Devil, as we cantered through the clouds to Dover.

"Dull beyond measure. I took my seat under the Gallery—no spirit in the debate—and not one speech save Stanley's that did justice to the speaker. Macaulay served up his old speeches as a hash, and uttered some fearful sophisms for so fine an intellect. The worst of that House is, that a sophism or a common-place is absolutely necessary to produce a splendid effect. Heavens! how they yell on Croker when he is illustrating misstatement; the natural beauty of Truth grows fearfully darkened in that dim oak room. But let us not rush into that *vetitum nefas**—that most hacknied of all subjects. What is there new?"

"Faith," said Asmodeus, "I ought to ask you that! A demon caged in a bottle of lotion is in a pretty plight to learn news, truly! I amused myself with looking over a few new books on your table. I read them as attentively as a reviewer; viz. six volumes in a quarter of an hour. I perceived three satirical poems lying together. Ah, said I, 'Lays for the Lords'† on the one side of the question, and the 'Tauroboliad' on the other."‡

"And the 'Tale of Tucuman,'§ more after my own vein than either," added Asmodeus, "for it hits devilish hard upon both sides. But how strangely times have altered in your poetical literature within the last twenty years; formerly, I remember well that no poetry was so successful as the satirical. A pamphlet of strong rhyme, with a liberal use of the mysterious asterisk, ran through half a dozen editions in a week. Now, what on earth are you all so indifferent to as satire, unless it be the satire of the Sunday newspapers? Here, for instance, is the 'Tauroboliad,' a poem of remarkable causticity and polish, and certainly equal in many parts to the 'Pursuits of Literature;' and not a bookseller could be found to publish it but Hatchard, and he, I fear, will not rejoice at his daring. 'The Lays

* [That villainously wicked, forbidden thing.]

† Effingham Wilson, 1831. ‡ Hatchard, 1831. § Effingham Wilson, 1831,

for the Lords' is a tempting title, and the poem is rough and manly enough, one would think, to charm you Radicals into laying out half-a-crown upon the abuse of the Tories. But I fancy if you had many half-crowns to spare, you would be Tories also."

"As for the 'Tale of Tucuman,'" said I, properly disregarding the illiberal sarcasm of the Devil, whom I suspect to be a Tory in his heart; "it has been largely and justly lauded by the critics, and evinces what is rare enough in a satirist—a mind that thinks rightly, and goes at once to the depth of things. The author has in him the stuff to make a very valuable writer, and I think he will do your cause harm yet before he dies."

"*My* cause!" said Asmodeus, stopping short in despite of the strong winds that now almost blew us away in the Straits of Dover. "*My* cause! Ah, you mortals wrong us devils,—upon my honour, you do: the origin of human evil is ignorance; and who was it that put it into your Ancestor's head to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge?"

"Grant me patience!" cried I; "here have I avoided all the world to have a respite from philosophers, and the march of intellect; and I cannot even form an acquaintance with a devil without being plagued with the origin of evil—ignorance and the tree of knowledge. Signor Don Asmodeus, if you are going to be metaphysical——"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Asmodeus, very humbly, "I was thinking of Holland House."

We got on most famously, as the reader will believe, while Asmodeus and I were thus chatting, now on one thing, now on the other—sometimes of the Emperor of Russia, sometimes of Captain Marryat's last novel—which, as we were crossing the sea, was the more apropos subject of the two, (and which, by the by, I can recommend to the reader as a capital thing,*)—sometimes of war, sometimes of love, sometimes of the great wonders in the deep beneath us, and sometimes—though the Devil was shy here—of the happy stars, that twinkled their bright eyes so cheerily above. We paused a moment over the town of Boulogne to recruit ourselves and change our steeds; (for we were mounted on a pair of Mr. Croker's

* "Newton Forster," Cochrane and Pickersgill,

notions of French politics—and they could never go a step farther than Boulogne.) As the Devil looked aslant on that little nest of English imperfections, his heart seemed to swell within him—"Oh, *Sentina Gentium!*" cried he aloud—"sink of impurities—reservoir into which, through the mighty drains of the ocean, England pours off the most foetid of her humours; who can look at thy little, turbulent, gambling, black-legged, duelling, swaggering world, without amazement and emotion? Botany Bay of society—living gazette of bankrupts, whether of character, hope, fortune, or health—in whose small page is crowded so voluminous a list! how pleasant it is to look upon thy motley varieties, and to feel that we may indeed go farther, but we can never fare worse! Paris is the *Circe* of the world, and Boulogne is her pigsty!"

I smiled at the Devil's panegyric, and looking down I beheld a multiplicity of scenes that fully proved its impartiality. There, in the High Town, I saw a fraudulent trader giving a ball from the profits of a bankruptcy; and in the next house, two captains on half-pay were exchanging shots across a table. In a small garret, in the lower part of the town, sat a squalid family, whom the bankrupt had ruined; the children crying for bread, and the father cursing for brandy, and the mother wishing herself dead. Far by the solitary shore was a smuggler's vessel, which dark forms were crowding with various goods—here a box of French lace for a duchess; there a chest of human corpses for the surgeons; here, spirits for a wine-merchant who was a miser; there, indecent prints for his son, who was a spendthrift. "That vessel," quoth the Devil, "is a type of the town!"

"And of the world, too," said I. "Let us canter on."

We had mounted on a couple of schemes for Saint Simonizing Paris, which the Devil caught out of the soul of a French waiter, and we were up in the clouds in an instant.

"Damn it!" quoth the Devil, very profanely, "we shall be in the moon presently. When a Frenchman does speculate, he takes good care to do it in right earnest: Earth's lost sight of before you can say Jack Robinson."

"And pray, my dear Don, what think you of all these schemes that fluctuate throughout France—this visionary lust of change—this non-contentment—this shifting ten-

dency to all excitation—this shot-silk colouring of the public mind, that changes hue in every light that you look at it—does it not portend ultimate benefit to us miserable mortals?”

“Humph!” growled Asmodeus, “I know nothing of the future; but, as a devil of sense, though no prophet, I think it is not so dangerous to the present generation in France as in England. If you don’t take care, and settle that stupid Bill* of yours very shortly, you will sink at once from the highest commercial nation in the world into a fifth-rate power. A trading people, who are only great artificially, and are prosperous upon credit, cannot long bear an excitement that unsettles commerce, makes debtors pressing, money scarce, tradesmen sore, farmers grumbling, and the desire for change so habitual, and at last a great change itself so necessary, that moderate change will be but a thimbleful of water on the fire. The soil of your greatness, compared to that of France, is like the soil of your land compared to hers. A war devastates France, ruins her harvests, crushes her vineyards, and in two years afterwards all is as fertile as before—thanks to Nature!—but your light, thin, sandy stratum—one vast hothouse of skilful forcing—if an army passed over it, would take a dozen years to recover—thanks to Art! So is it with your moral condition, equally artificial as your soil. What agitates France now, injures her not to-morrow. What agitates England now, if not speedily removed, will do the evil work of a century. Look to yourselves in time, and if you must have excitement, prefer the agitation of freedom to the fever of discontent.”

“My dear Devil, what a libel on yourself and your brethren to say you can’t speak truth!”

“It is so,” answered Asmodeus; “we speak truth exactly because that is the very way to make mankind run into error. Truth is the true Cassandra—fated never to be believed till too late!”

Away—away—away—with the dull English lord in his *calèche* and four creeping behind us, and the breath of the mail’s panting horses dying on our track—away through that gladsome air which dances over the valleys of France, and mounts into the brain like a glorious wine—away

* [The Reform Bill of 1832, which had been read a first time on the 12th, and a second time on the 17th, of the preceding month of December.]

above the lamplit towns, with the husband already asleep, and the lover for ever waking—away, below the gay moon that has just come out, to smile at once upon Joy and Sorrow, Innocence and Crime, the fair stoic of Heaven. We are in PARIS!

"There is a change," said Asmodeus, as we sat perched on the dome of the *Invalides*, "there is a change in Paris since you were last here. Observe how serious the *salons* have become; the champagne of society has lost its sparkle."

I looked into the old remembered houses: Asmodeus said right—people were gambling, and talking, and making love as before, but not with the same gaiety; the dark spirit of change worked vividly beneath the surface of manners; circles were more mixed and motley than they had been; men without the "*De*" mixed familiarly with those who boasted the blood of princes; a tone of insolence seemed substituted for the tone of intrigue; and men appeared resolved rather to command the attainment of their wishes than to wheedle themselves into it.

"Fit subjects!" quoth the Devil, lighting his cigar, "for a king who rides bodkin in an omnibus!"

From these scenes I turned with great interest to one that contrasted them forcibly. Apart—alone, in a quiet chamber, sat a man somewhat stricken in years, with a fine and worn countenance, that spoke genius in every line. He leant his head on his hand; papers and books strewed the table at which he sat, and I noted especially one pamphlet, entitled "*De la Nouvelle Proposition relative au Bannissement de Charles X. et de sa Famille.*"

"Wonderful power of pen and ink!" said Asmodeus. "Great ruler of human hearts!—talk of the authority of despots—the quill of a goose is the true sceptre. You see there a man who, by the mere charm of his pen, has made himself a fourth estate: a visionary in his youth, a quack in his old age, he is yet the most remarkable being that France can now boast of. But as for you Englishmen, locked up in your own little island, and reading Mr. Hunt's speeches about Preston, you absolutely do not know anything more about M. de Chateaubriand, and his present influence in France, than that he wrote a pamphlet the other day, which pamphlet has never been even translated in London, and has been read in the original by at most

six Londoners. And yet this pamphlet, which you, I fancy, conclude to be the same sort of thing as 'What will the Lords do next?' raised its author at once into a throne of opinion, and made a greater sensation in France than the finest poem of your Byron ever created in England." *

"The more the pity for France. I was in hopes she had passed the time when fine words could set her feelings against her principles."

"You are still mounted on a chimera," said the Devil sarcastically. "France can always be won by addressing her heart, just the same as eloquence with you must be addressed to the pocket. You speak to the one of her national greatness, to the other of her national debt; but it is unfortunate for you English, that you do not pay more attention to foreign literature and foreign politics. You ought to hear what the rest of the world say of you;—you ought to see how grand, how true the views, which, from a just distance, Frenchmen in particular, form of your present situation. You are like a man who can only talk of himself, and to himself; one great National Soliloquist wrapt in a Monologue!"

With that Asmodeus threw away the stump of his cigar, and we alighted at the door of the *Rocher*. Small, cheerful chamber, do I see you again, with the large brown sleek cat in the arm-chair! Stir up the fire—make haste with the *Chambertin* and the *Sauté*—where is the playbill, and the *Figaro*? Oh, Asmodeus! in this city I find again the pleasures of youth! Can you restore to me also the health,—the heart to enjoy them?"

* The writer of the article [in that same January number of the *New Monthly*, 1832], on Talleyrand, considers that great diplomat, we think with great felicity, the "Voltaire" of politics—M. de Chateaubriand is the Rousseau.

No. II.

The warning of Asmodeus against love.—The fate of Authors below.—The principles of Criticism and Morality the same.—The Excursion renewed.—Foudras.—Casimir Perier.—The art of hatching plots.—A view of *les amis du peuple*.—General Dubourg, &c.—A *comité doctrinaire*.—The Duc de Broglie.—M. Guizot.—M. Thiers, &c.—The Tuileries.—The Royal Family.—Louis Philippe and his dispositions.—Return Londonwards.—The Devil's remarks on the Lord Chancellor.—Apostrophe to Novelty.—Asmodeus re-appears.—Chit-chat upon Literature.—Morals, &c.—Walk out.—The Devil's admiration of Buckingham Palace.—The Duke of Wellington—considerations on his probable estimate of mankind.—The Devil and myself resolve to go to a Public Dinner—And elsewhere!

AFTER all, there are few pleasanter modes of spending your time than over a bottle of good Chambertin, enjoyed with an agreeable Devil. As we leave the age of five-and-twenty behind us, we begin to like wine and talk. Women and moonlight are still charming,—but they have passed from the drama of life to the interlude. “And what,” said I to Asmodeus,—“what do you propose for the rest of the night? shall we visit Béranger, and make him sing us one of his own songs, or shall we hire a guitar between us and go a-serenading with Messieurs les *Chats*? perhaps your present Don Cleofas may discover a new Seraphina.” “As to that,”—replied Asmodeus, as he quaffed the first glass of a new bottle, for those devils are judges of good wine, and their constitutional thirst is a great advantage to them in a place like the Rocher;—“as to that, whenever you wish to turn lover, I am at your service—’tis my vocation—I am the imp of valets and billets-doux, and an intrigue is the breath of my nostrils—but I warn you, I have a little of the Mephistopheles in my nature when it comes to love-making, and my assistance may not turn out so happily as it seems. You see how frank wine makes one.”

The Devil said this with great gravity—but I who was bent upon falling in love at the first favourable opportunity, and who, the more I see of life, am the more convinced that falling in love is far better than business, ambition, law, or even fighting—for disrobing oneself of ennui—filled my glass gaily—and drinking to the memory of *Le Sage*, cried to the Devil—“A truce with your warnings, Asmodeus—I renounce human friends, because they are

always advising and foretelling—plunge me into embarrassments—I will not blame—I will love you for it—I like a difficulty above all things—it is such a pleasure to get out of it. I never knew either despair or regret, and I defy the devil himself to subdue my hearty confidence in my own resources. But drink, Asmodeus—drink to the memory of that incomparable wit, who has left us in the Boy of Santillane, the epic of daily life: how I envy you the honour of having made his acquaintance! By-the-by—hem!—pray what become of novel-writers in the next world? You see nothing of them, I hope.”

“They are punished according to their literary demerits,” replied the Devil, “for a bad novel is a serious injury to mankind. Of good writers know we nought—for it is held that a man can do more good by a book than harm by a life, and it is not even asked in the next world whether or not Shakspeare loved *le beau sexe et le bon vin*.”

“*Monsieur le Diable, à votre santé*. Your sentiments do the highest honour to your head and heart; and in future I will study the canons of criticism, instead of the laws of morality.”

“They are one and the same, properly understood,” said the Devil, coolly;—and tossing off his last glass, for no sooner had he begun to moralize, than he made double haste towards the end of the bottle—he rose up, and proposed an Haroun-al-Raschid sort of excursion.

“With all my heart,” said I, seizing my hat. So we paid the bill, and sauntered into the street. The Devil began to whistle. “I have summoned,” said he, after he had finished an air from *Der Freischütz*,—“I have summoned a couple of notions of travelling from the mind of a German Prince*—here they are—and will serve us for horses in our ride about the city. His Highness lately visited you, entered people’s houses under a feigned name, and where he was received as the Prince, he lived as the spy. His notions of travelling are particularly useful to us in our excursion, for they are excessively rapid, so much so, that they distance recollection, and play the deuce with exactness. But that’s nothing to us, we are not writing travels. *Allons!*” We sprang on our steeds, and I felt myself instantly seized with the furor of describing. Nay,

* [Prince Puckler Muskau was the German author and traveller here referred to.]

the more I saw of a house, the more I felt inclined to abuse its inhabitants. But my horse shied so that I was all but over—when it came unawares on a house, called, from the English original, ‘The Traveller’s Club.’”

“Look,” said Asmodeus, pointing to me the house of the Home Department; “do you see in that room those two gentlemen, who are very busily reading a despatch. That long-faced, bald man is M. Foudras, the secretary-general of Perier—the very man who was the bosom friend of Decazes and Corbiere: he is the best inventor and discoverer of mock conspiracies that Paris possesses—they are going to give him a patent for it. The other, he on the righthand, is Mr. Gisquet, the Prefet of Police—an *exporteur* of the house of Perier, and *homme de paille* of the present President of the Council. The paper they are reading is a denunciation against *les amis du peuple*, who are divided in several sections, and who assemble secretly in private houses to plot and to discuss political matters. According to the Arguses of Mr. Gisquet, they are everywhere, but are never found when the police makes a descent on the suspected rendezvous.”

While Asmodeus was giving me this information, the door opened; a thin, pale man entered. Foudras and Gisquet rose respectfully. “And who is he?” said I.—“That is no less a person than Casimir Perier,” replied Asmodeus. “You see how attentively he is perusing that paper. It is the evening journal, ‘*The Mouvement*.’ Observe what contortions, and what grimaces, he makes: see how he trembles with rage. General Dubourg attacks him personally every evening. Look, now, how fiercely he falls upon the Prefet de Police. Satan! his Prefetship has no sinecure! He has ordered that two new spies should be directed to watch and follow every step of General Dubourg. See, now, they have taken again to the denunciation! The Minister is furious, and has threatened to disgrace M. Foudras if he does not find out the chief rendezvous of the *amis du peuple*. Our gentlemen seem abashed. Perier has exposed to them his painful situation; strong suspicions are entertained that the conspiracy of Notre Dame has been one of his political stratagems; it is also to be apprehended, that before the Justice the persons arrested will prove it to be so. Perier will throw all the blame on M. Foudras and Gisquet, if he cannot by other means pre-

vent certain disclosures of his conduct. This they will submit to. Hear them—they promise to take upon themselves all the blame in the transaction, should it come to light; but they have demanded a new supply of money to arrange the matter: it is granted. Money is the last thing a good Minister cares about, especially if it's the Nation's."

After this, the Prime Minister sat down to write. I begged Asmodeus to inform me upon what subject; the Devil replied that he was inditing a letter to Metternich, and that it related to the affairs of Italy. "Perier will not interfere, should the Austrians go again into the Roman States."—"Is it possible?" replied I.—"Nay, it is necessary!" retorted Asmodeus; "France has lost the opportunity of commanding respect, and she must now act with forbearance."*

"But," continued my guide, "turn yourself this way, and I will show you a meeting of the *amis du peuple*." I obeyed, and saw a great number of young men, assembled in a large room: they were all standing, and a little man, with black hair, and very dark complexion, was haranguing them. "Who is he?" asked I. "That is M. Marrast,† the most violent of the *amis du peuple*, and the most constant personal enemy of Louis Philippe and Casimir Perier. That tall man that stands by him is Mr. Fazy, the Editor of '*La Revolution*;' and the dark and tall fine-looking man, whom you see next to Fazy, is General Dubourg." While Asmodeus was speaking to me, the assembly gradually warmed into great agitation. They seemed exasperated, and gesticulated vehemently:—those foreigners cannot get coolly into a passion, as we do! "And why all that agitation?" said I to Asmodeus. "Why? Because Marrast has ended his speech by advising his comrades not to lose time—to prepare for attacking openly the government as soon as possible; for if they delay, there is little hope for them."

*[History again repeats itself. Now, in 1875, forty-three years afterwards, these words are exactly applicable as descriptive of the relation between France and Italy.]

† [Sixteen years after this, Armand Marrast, who had been all the while consistently the implacable foe of the citizen king and his ministers, after the Revolution of February, 1848, from being the editor of the *National* became the President of the Republican National Assembly.]

"And who is that young man now speaking so violently?"

"That is Gallois, the same who was tried for having threatened to murder Louis Philippe, and who was acquitted. That other next to him is Guinard, a true Republican, who has more respect for a *chiffonnier* than for Louis Philippe and all his Ministers. That little fellow with a bald head is Cauchois le Maire, a very liberal writer, and the only independent *redacteur* of 'The Constitutionnel.'"

"Now I will show you a *Comité Doctrinaire*. In that drawing-room, you see those stern-looking gentlemen sitting around that sofa which is occupied by three persons? Well, that in the middle is the Duke de Broglie; the one on the right hand is M. Guizot, and that on the left is the President of the Chamber of Deputies. That very little man, now talking, is M. Thiers,—the great champion of the *juste milieu*. Next to him observe that crafty-looking man, that is M. Dupin, the elder, the bosom friend of Louis Philippe, and the best turn-coat of Europe. He who stands by M. Guizot is Montalivet, late Minister of the Home Department, present Minister of Instruction, and who would not object to be *Ministre du Pot de Chambre*, provided he was only a Minister."—"But what are they chatting about?" said I, somewhat irreverently.—"They are consulting," answered Asmodeus, "the best means of preventing Odilon Barrot, Mauguin, and Lamarque from overthrowing the present Administration. The Duke has proposed to make them Peers of France, in order to take them from the Chamber of Deputies, and therefore Thiers has put himself into the rage proper to a man who admires *le juste milieu*, and has declared this project dangerous: first, because the proposed Peers would, probably, not accept the honour; and secondly, because, if they did accept it, it would be an admission on the part of the present Administration that the Opposition had almost conquered the *juste milieu*. The little orator, you perceive, has succeeded, and all the assembly are of his opinion." At this moment entered Casimir Perier. He was received with great eagerness. Asmodeus told me that he had brought the original of the letter he had just written to Metternich. It was read *en comité*, and all present approved the political principles it contained. I next saw coming in a gentleman, tall, and

of a yellowish complexion; with a cast in his eye. I inquired who he was, and Asmodeus told me that he was M. Barthe, the Minister of Justice. As soon as he was seated, I remarked that all the members collected around him, and were listening with great attention to what he was saying. "And what is *he* speaking of?" said I. "Why, he is repeating the examination of the principal persons arrested for the conspiracy of Notre Dame. Have you seen how markedly Guizot and Perier are struck by his narration? Well, the procedure does not promise a favourable result for the present Administration."

We now spurred on our horses, and entered the garden of the Tuileries—dear-remembered garden of assignations and hopes—of meetings, of quarrels, of reconciliations! Never, till youth itself be forgotten, shall I forget thee!

I turned, with a sigh, to contemplate the interior of the Tuileries. I saw that beautiful apartment which had been inhabited by Marie Antionette, Josephine, Marie Louise, the Duchesse d'Angoulême, and of which the Queen of the French is *now* the possessor.* Here, in the drawing-room which opens on the gardens, the Queen was with her girls, and her two younger sons. She was reading a pious Italian book, "*La Manna dell' anima*;" Princess Marie, who is destined to be the wife of all the *new-created kings*, was writing a letter, and Asmodeus told me it was addressed to General Beilliard, and turned on the projected marriage with King Leopold; Princess Clementine was embroidering, and Princess Louise was making up linen for the poor. The Dukes de Monpensier and D'Aumale were playing at draughts, and both dressed as Gardes Nationales. After this, Asmodeus showed me the former habitation of Madame de Barry, now the residence of the sister of Louis Philippe. She was very busy in casting up accounts, and in making notes for the curtailing the emoluments of those who are employed about the Court. She had in her hands the *bill of M. Paër*, of the last musical concert, and had reduced it almost to half the sum usually

* [The *now* is italicised in the original—the emphasis of the passage having about it since a curiously sinister significance, remembering not only that Queen Amelie was expelled from the Tuileries in 1848, and the Empress Eugenie in her turn compelled to fly from those imperial roof-beams, but that the palace itself was a few months afterwards committed to the flames by the Commune.]

given. *Mon Dieu!* if I could but get her for my house-keeper!

"Now," said Asmodeus to me, "you will see Louis Philippe." I turned, and beheld a man, with a respectable father-of-a-family look, sitting by a table with a bald-headed gentleman, and poring very attentively over an architectural design.

"The bald-headed gentleman is M. Fontaine, the architect: they are concerting a plan for a Royal Bazaar. His Majesty has a great turn for such projects; in fact, between you and me, his character has been mistaken—he only looks on the Crown as a great commercial speculation. He has at once the soul and the civility of a tax-gatherer; and if he loses the Throne, give him a patent for building shops on a new plan, with a certain gain, and he will be at once the happiest and most popular man in the kingdom."

By these remarks it was easy to perceive that Asmodeus was no lover of the citizen king; but who knows whether the satire of the Devil was not the best compliment the Monarch could receive? I settle not these points. I wish to keep well with a Government that could banish one from the *Rocher de Cancale*. And I would fain not share with Lady Morgan the honours of an interdict.

The Devil proceeded to descant on the royal *ménage*, when turning round he perceived me very unequivocally yawning. He had lived too long with the aristocracy not to be well bred, and he immediately proposed to me a change of scene: the wine, however, had made me drowsy, and I proposed a return to London in order to let the newspapers know what was really going on at the Metropolis of Europe. The Devil consented, and telling our steeds to be steady for once in a way, we set off in an easy canter. The Devil fell into a profound silence—it lasted so long that I was surprised at it, despite of my own drowsiness. "What are you thinking of, my friend?" said I.—"I was thinking," quoth Asmodeus, "of the Lord Chancellor."—"Better now than later," said I; "he would be delighted if he knew who was so honouring him."—"I was thinking," resumed the Devil, disregarding my remark, "how desirable it would be for France to possess such a man!"* the mis-

* [Precisely the same idea, oddly enough, occurred to Lord Brougham himself sixteen years later on, when, shortly after the proclamation of the Republic of February by Lamartine, he applied, in vain, as it happened, to

fortune of France is that her men of reflection are not men of action—her men of action are not men of reflection. Had she possessed one who was both, and who, as great a man as Harry Brougham, was also as *profound an actor*, and had he been thrown uppermost as he undoubtedly would, France now would have sprung up from her revolution on the wings of her proper eagle. He would apparently have spurned the *juste milieu*—he would have marched at the head of the *mouvement*. But he would have restrained while he appeared to have encouraged, and won confidence for principles while he was guiding those principles into legitimate channels.”

“Doubtless,” said I, “but Harry Brougham has pretty nearly the same part to play at home!”

“Not at all,” rejoined Asmodeus quickly; “do you not perceive that in England he is chained by the fetters of his vocation? With all his versatility, Lord Brougham cannot be Prime Minister and Lord Chancellor both. His law reforms, and his law hearings, and his wooolsack, and his replies to Lord Dudley give him enough to do. Pity that he was ever a lawyer—he ought to be your Prime Minister at this moment. He, at least, would not have been wavering between six Peers and thirty. The Reform would have been gained ere this, and England—” Here, having had enough of Reform from human lips, I fell fast asleep, and when I woke it was broad noon on the next day, and I was in my own bed-room in — Street.

O Novelty! Mother of all our delights—the bright-eyed—the fresh-breathing—the seraph-winged!—Morning of the soul—wishes are the birds that hymn thee—hopes are the dews that sparkle beneath thy tread—where thou walkest, all things are eloquent with gladness, and life’s air is quaffed as an elixir. What is love without thee?—what ambition?—what social conviviality?—what even solitary aspirings?—the first of anything how delightful—the repetition how palling! Thee do I hunt with an eager heart through an existence that I feel is not fated to endure long. Come when it will, the last day shall find me prepared, and

the Provisional Government for permission to become naturalised. It was in celebration of this curious political freak on the part of the ex-Chancellor that John Leech drew his famous cartoon in *Punch* of Lord Brougham as a Citizen of the World.]

I will walk with a bold step across that bridge which conducts me at least to a world hitherto untried! in truth, a man must indeed be an adorer of novelty when he rides out in the nights of January with the Devil for a companion!

While I was thus musing and sipping my coffee, Asmodeus entered the room. I greeted him with joy. "And what news?" cried I, throwing down the papers which I had just taken up in despair.

"Why, I find," said Asmodeus—"have you any cigars here? ah! thank you, they're all the fashion not only in Regent Street above, but in Pandemonium below, ever since James the First flattered our national pride by attributing the invention of tobacco to us"—"why, I find some one—not you of course, you have been too busy—has been putting our adventures into a Magazine, and I have been asking the world what they think of us."

"Ah! that must be interesting," said I, drawing my chair nearer my visitor's, for I dare say the reader has lived long enough to know that anything about oneself is interesting:—and that is the charm of notoriety.

"Why, they say that my re-appearance is not new."

"A discovery, few re-appearances are! But what does that signify?—you appear after a new fashion—surely that is novelty enough in the world. We will make the adventures new before we part, and, by-the-by, you shall introduce me *au plutôt* to the Fairies, since you insinuate they still exist. It will be pleasant to spend one of these frosty nights among the green knolls of the pigmy gentles. The Magazine—what sort of a thing is that?"

"Oh, an old friend with a new face. It proposes to fill up a certain vacuum in English literature, and aims at the design of the Encyclopedists of France, leaving out their infidelity and so forth—to keep up philosophically with the *movement*, and to fight the old opinions with the new. It takes a modest name, but has more aims and more intentions than it puts forth."

"May it prosper!" said I, disinterestedly: "doubtless it deserves it: and what else is there stirring in the great Republic of Literature?"

"Marry!" returned the Devil, "you are growing so good that there are very few books now published that a Devil can read. I remember the time when every Novel smacked of the stews—when a play was villany made pleasant—and

every doctrinal controversy was brimful of envy, malice, and the inhumanities of hatred. Now all is smooth, civil, and oily. Your Novelists moralize, and your Plays fast on a meagre *double entendre*. As to controversy there's an end of it—except in politics. This growing decency is not peculiar to England—it extends all over Europe. Manners wear petticoats, and are ladylike exceedingly. Yet, you are not a bit better for it—we have just as large a proportion of you below. Why is this? I don't understand it. Nor does your conversation in this respect reflect the modest colours of your literature. Men talk just as naughtily after dinner—Divines and ladies abuse each other just as vehemently as ever. In jesting, the most popular jokes are still the least delicate, and yet the moment you see in a book anything the least resembling what you are all talking, laughing, chuckling, and hugging yourselves about every day in the week, you set up your backs at it, and call the author all the names you can think of. In fact all men have two suits of character—the every-day suit and the Sunday suit. And the best of you are much deeper hypocrites than the world is aware of."

The morning looked fine, and so I proposed a stroll. Asmodeus, who seemed not himself to be always free from ennui, agreed to the proposition with considerable avidity. We had scarce got into the street before we met the Bishop of London. I had some slight acquaintance with his Lordship—he joined us, and the Devil, with great politeness, offered him his arm. I pass over our conversation, lest the good Bishop should regret his familiarity with my companion. But what can a Bishop expect from a Reformer? "I know not," said the Devil, as we now *tête-à-tête* entered the Green Park, "what I should more observe in you English, than your half-and-halfness. You are so bold and so timid—so lavish and so economical. You order a New Palace slap dash—and just when it's finished, you think it would be better to let it go to ruin. But really you have no grounds for such niggardly conduct in the case of this splendid edifice," and the Devil, putting on his spectacles, peered at the pile of Pimlico which stood majestically before us. "How grand!" ejaculated Asmodeus; "what a noble simplicity!—here are no crowded ornaments, no paltry figures, no overladen imagery—all is simple and striking—then the building is so lofty and so commanding—you may

see it all over London. Ah, your architects study the sublime! And what a beautiful idea that round thing at the top—the crown or rather nightcap of the whole; it looks just as if you had first put up the house, and were now going to *put it out!* Doubtless a moral is ingeniously meant—something about Time destroying the noblest edifices. And indeed that would be very emblematic—for I hear the palace was not intended to last.

‘All that’s bright must fade.’

’Tis a pretty idea making ephemera in brick and mortar—poetical!”

“Pooh!” said I, patriotically, for Buckingham Palace, as the reader well knows, is a sore point with us:—“Pooh! the Palace is a very fine Palace, and Mr. Nash says it will be quite another thing when it comes to have its gold gates (mosaic gold) put on. But indeed we shall probably let it stay as it is. The nation can’t spend any more money upon objects of show.”

“That is exactly it,” returned the Devil, in his d—d sententious way; “you make a sacrifice to Extravagance, that you may leave it unfinished—a monument of Folly!”

While we were thus conversing, the Duke of Wellington drove by in his carriage.

“Now,” quoth the Devil, “I am curious to know what that man thinks of human nature. Between you and me, I suspect that he heartily despises it. One thing he must despise, and that is Popular Opinion. No man ever saw it through so many varieties. Adored to-day, hissed to-morrow—now worshipped with huzzas, now pelted with brickbats—now receiving a magnificent house from the public bounty, and now seeing its windows smashed by the public indignation. Can that man respect those who are all idolators at one hour, all execrators the next? Impossible! for he must know himself to have been always the same!—the same when hissed, the same when huzzaed! And he has only, therefore, the choice, whether he shall depise in his fellow-subjects the want of consistency, or the want of penetration!”

“Signor Don Asmodeus, you talk very well for a Spanish Devil, but you are not profound enough for an Englishman. The people are all very right—when the man served their cause (or they fancied he did), they were grateful—when

he impeded it, they were indignant. *Voilà*, a very simple way of viewing the case."

"It is not saying much for mankind, when your best apology for them is insisting on the naturalness of being selfish," said the Devil.

"Nonsense!" said I. "Tell me one thing—will the Duke of Wellington ever be Prime Minister again?"

"Possibly; in a reformed Parliament."

"Ha! ha!"

"I'm very serious. Re-action *may* follow Reform—the absurdity is, to suppose that it can precede it."

"That's true enough," said I, and I fell into a reverie; "for my friends are Whigs—God bless and God help them!"

"Observe that old gentleman in his green carriage," quoth the Devil; "he is J——, the wit of a former age. He has become deaf, in order not to hear the dull things of his successors. Poor J——! It is a curious sight, and full of interest, the spectacle of a superannuated jester!—it is like the skeleton of a butterfly! There is one thing that seems strange to me in the nature of wit—it fluctuates. A man, very witty in one age, is thought either very vulgar or very dull in the next: it is because wit depends upon the tone of the times, and thus becomes, in the vein of its *persiflage*, in fashion or out. Poor J——! I remember being behind his elbow some hundred or two years ago, when a tax was laid on hair-powder and tea. J—— scratched off the following impromptu—it was thought wonderful then:—

'You tax your powder, and you tax our tea—
We'll soon have no *beaux* left—not ev'n *bo-hea*!'

"The wit," said I, "is certainly not of the most elevated order;" and thereupon the Devil and I fell into a long dispute about the nature of wit, in which, *selon la regle*, nothing was omitted—but wit itself.

"What is this?" said I, some little while afterwards, as we were looking over the newspapers at the Athenæum—"A Public Dinner,' to celebrate the memory of Burns and the arrival of the Ettrick Shepherd!—let us go." The Devil sneered, and we went.

Oh! what a failure! Dinner presumptive at six o'clock, and apparent at a quarter past seven! Then the literary

gentlemen present!—the flower of England—warmed from ill-humour to noise; and the row became stunning. It was evidently a Tory trap—none of the Liberals advertised as stewards, Campbell, &c. were present—doubtless they heard the meeting was to be political, and discreetly kept away. Such is the mania of Politics, that even the peaceful ground of Literature is not to be left unpolluted!—the high name of Burns, the noblest of Scotland's reformers, is to be prostituted to the purposes of Anti-reform!—and Hogg (whose bold and native genius required more generous treatment) is to be considered, not as the Poet of "Kilmene," but the incarnation of Blackwood's Magazine. These devices of party despair make a freeman sick—they make a Tory traveller exceedingly drunk—*verbum sat!* Great Burns! brave and unhappy spirit! couldst thou have looked down and beheld thy haughty name bowed to such purposes?—Out on it!

The Devil saw me in a passion—"Come home," said he, "for to-morrow night I have better sport in store for you. Talking of Burns, puts me in mind of Witches and Tam O'Shanter. I know some most agreeable Witches—to-morrow night is a gala—I will introduce you to them."

"Are you in earnest?—are Witches still extant?"

"In plenty."

"Give me your hand. O Diamond of Devils, you restore me to life!—is it possible that at this day I still have one novelty left me, and that of the feminine sex! Oh! Asmodeus, an *amour* with a Witch will be heaven itself!"

"Are not ordinary women possessed of sufficient witchcraft?" said the Devil.

I was about to reply, when suddenly

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No. III.

The Reform Bill the only hacknied subject to be considered news.—Moonlight.—Asmodeus and myself on our way to the Witches.—Beauty of a river by night.—Recollections.—The Devil's account of the Opera and opinion of Mr. Monck Mason's management.—Managers in General.—A dreary heath.—The mystic light.—The Devil's description of fire.—The impiety of attributing the Cholera to God.—The old Abbey described.—The Witches' meeting.—The disturbance.—Peace restored.—Flirtation with a Witch.—Kosem Kesamim.—My account of the state of things in England.

INCOMPARABLE Cervantes! no one ever managed like thee the difficult art of breaking off!—witness that marvellous—Pish! Who would quote Cervantes, unless, peradventure, he wanted to swell up a book with passages which a man who has a soul bigger than a sixpence, ought to have learnt by heart! O! Cervantes, was I thinking of thee when I broke off, with so abrupt a sublimity, in the very midst of the great Burns' Dinner, with the Devil at my elbow!

"Well! and what was the cause of the interruption?" My dear Sir, that is not worth inquiring about; these matters, like King Lear, are "old now." Let us talk of something else. God knows that, in the three-hundred-and-thirty-three third-readings of the Reform Bill that have been, and probably will be, before my Lord Grey thinks fit to make up his own or the King's mind, we shall have old matter enough for discussion—I hate riding a hack subject for ever. My God! what a thing it is to look back upon!—this dawdling Bill, this type and incarnation of the arch serpent Delay! Why, we ought by this time to have laid the axe to the Irish monopolies of sanctity—to have floated our flag over the Taxes on Knowledge—to have cried avaunt to that ghastly leper "the Punishment of Death"—to have—Out on us! here we are, cap in hand, cringing and capering, and muffling the thunders of a Great People's voice, to suit the humours of some half-a-score mushroom noblemen, with bought pedigrees, mortgaged properties, and three-penn'orth of understanding as common stock! Patience, patience! and shuffle the cards—meanwhile I'll go and take a ride with the Devil.

Hurrah! hurrah!—the moon is up and the stars are out, and swift, thin, grey, sweep the clouds above us, like

Boroughmongers trying to put out the eternal light with a little vapouring.

"Asmodeus, we are going to see the Witches."

"Certainly: but how comes it, my friend, that you have any romance left in you? There's the World calls you ambitious; and yet, instead of knitting rope-ladders to Power, you are riding out with me and your imagination to sup with the Witches."

"All in good time, Master Asmodeus. Youth yet rushes through my veins, especially when on horseback, finding something new, or making love. There is time enough for a man, who is yet prettily fairly on the right side of thirty (and who has not been idle on the whole) to enjoy himself a little longer, and 'to frolic while 'tis May.' The evil day must come at last. But, Asmodeus, hark you!—the occasion makes the man, and we wait the occasion; it is not yet ripe—the times must bring it; and then he who has aught in him, should wager all he has done for one bold attempt at what he can do. Hurrah! hurrah! how the hedges run off from us, and the prodigal moon showers her jewels over the greedy waters like a rich English Lord on a Goddess of the *Ballet*. A river by night, with a shagged bank, and the stars at play with the ripple, is the finest thing in the world! Heigho! some (how many!) years ago—it was along such a river as that below us, Asmodeus, that I used to glide my boat to those walls which held the merriest eyes and the rosiest lips that ever gave welcome to a lover! But *revenons à nos moutons*! And what's the news! Have you been to the Theatres since I last saw you, looking for snares, and at 'Robert,' your relative?"

"No: but I went to a big house the other night, where I heard some wretched sounds. I asked what they were—I was told Music! I saw some over-dressed-looking nobodies. I asked who they were, and was told 'a most fashionable audience!' I inquired the name of the building, and was told '*the Opera*.' I asked the cause of its being so bad, and was told the cause was 'not of an importance quite proportioned to the effects, and its name was—Monck Mason!'"

"Ha! ha! ha!—that is pithy and true, Don Diavolo."

"You flatter me. What is this cause of operatic deterioration—this Monck Mason?"

"One of that class of men in England prone to ruin themselves, and call it a speculation. They are styled Managers; they procure patents from Government to forbid sense being allowed at other theatres than their own; and they then deliberately set themselves down to squander away their fortunes upon nonsense! The Managers of the two great English Theatres are the best specimens of this genus of Managerial Monomaniacs."

"Have you been to this Opera House yourself?" asked Asmodeus, yawning at the very name.

"I!—why you are aware that my hunt is for Novelty, and Heaven knows the Opera now is the last place where to look for anything new!"

Thus chatting, Asmodeus and myself soon got over the ground; and we came at last to a wide and dreary heath. Spreading far, dark and motionless beyond, as a girdle that surrounded the whole desolate expanse, was a gloomy chain of fir and larch; and as we now swept rapidly on, the hoarse roar of the sea smote, with its deep tone of majesty and power, upon our ears. Presently, from the extreme quarter of this continuous wood, there shot up a train of pale light, and contrasted the depth of shadow against which it shone. The Devil rubbed his hands—"The jolly girls!" quoth he; "I would we were with them!"

"Does yonder light burn, then, from the place of meeting?"

"Ay," returned the Devil, in a strange tone; "for know you that FIRE is not that mute and simple element for which ye take it: it is a life, and it is a spirit; and when ye see it rise, and flicker, and dart to-and-fro with a sportful malice, it is not dumb and senseless—your brute agent and minister—but it singeth to its own burning heart, and laughs and gibbers at the destruction which it causes. For the throne and Prince of Fire are within the centre of the Earth, and there the bright King, by little and little, wastes, and gnaws, and widens the space around him. Sometimes in his exultation—for he is the merriest of the Fiends—he claps his hands, and moves restlessly to-and-fro, and sends up his blazing pæans in words that gush from the mountain tops, in sparkles of living flame; for the volcanoes are the great vistas to his dwelling-place, and thence he scatters and dispenses the seeds, that sown

here and there in the heart of the barren stone, or the dry wood whence the proper life has departed, produce his glittering children. But Fire is the Arch-consumer of the world—by Fire shall the world cease; and the Fiend, conscious of his destiny, grows impatient for his crowning banquet; you invoke him as a friend, and he comes laughing to your call—and he sits by your hearth, and obeys your household wants. But like other fiends, he only comes for his prey—you must woo him by continued sacrifices—cease to gorge him, and he flies. Look, when the fuel waxes low, how the disappointed imp grows faint and sickly of aspect—how he retreats along the ruins he has made, slowly, slowly, to the last point where he can yet destroy; and how, when that, too, is also blasted, how, with a sudden bound and a ghastly smile, he disappears—*whither?*—No, man,—no,” continued Asmodeus after a pause; “no, there is a science in the things around you that mock your vain knowledge, your physics, and your metaphysics, and your see-sawings to-and-fro about mind and matter, and first causes, and—Pish!”

“Pish! indeed, Signor Don Devil—you have been so fine for the last five minutes, that I fancied you were going to let me into some of the deeper secrets of Hades; and really they would be well worthy the trouble of learning, especially as I never intend to be an eye-witness of their accuracy. Do you know, Asmodeus, that nothing pleases me so much as those old stories, in which the Devil, your great master, comes to bargain with a gentleman or lady, and gets cheated in the attempt; for instance, in the tale of ‘The Smith of Avoca.’ Any truth in these legends, Eh?”

“By the horse-shoe, yes! The Devil is often cheated, when men take some little trouble to do it. It is the lazy alone that he effectually secures.”

Asmodeus paused; and presently, as if thinking of something else, broke into his usual low, short laugh.

“And what now, Asmodeus?—are you making epigrams for the ‘Figaro?’”

“No! I was thinking how nicely my master got off in the matter of the Cholera.”

“What do you mean?”

“Why, I thought you Christians believed that there were two principles—that of Good, which is God—that of Evil,

which is the Devil. For light—and air—for love—for peace—for all that is happy here—and more than happy hereafter, you are to thank God; and war, and crime, and misery,—sin upon earth, and punishment in hell—*these* are the Devil's doings. Well, a fearful pestilence enters your country, and you insist upon attributing this blessing to God Almighty!—the Giver of all Good makes you a present of a most agonizing epidemic, and you fall into a great rage with the impiety of those who venture to hint that the Benevolent One ought not to be accused of so cruel a gift! You appoint a day for solemnly assuring God that the disease came immediately from his mercy—and you attribute to him that evil which, according to your religion, properly emanates from the Devil. The Devil is infinitely obliged to you!"

"Ay, we are often called upon to exclaim, Is this the 19th century? Now I venture to predict that many shallow-skulled persons hearing of our adventures, will suppose them incredible—as if a ride with yourself and a supper with Witches were half so monstrous an outrage on common sense as the fearful exhibitions of Mr. Spencer Perceval, and the appointing a General Fast for a disease for which good living is the best preventive. Thank Heaven, however, the miserable superstition was not general! There was a time when the People were fooled, and the Government fools—but that time is gone. The People now ask for cheap bread, and their Rulers appoint a day for a General Fast—which are the wisest? But a truce with these subjects—we near the spot of our destination."

By the cliffs of the West of England are the ruins of a certain old Abbey, which no lover of the picturesque willingly leaves unvisited. And proud in its melancholy grandeur looked those ruins now, as borne on the vast wings which Asmodeus had conjured to our aid, we sailed above the woods towards them. Part was hid, not only by the luxuriant lichens and moss that clung to the grey stones, but also by many a tree that drooped mournfully over the fallen columns and the shattered arch. But through one high and oriel window the moon shone with a deep and settled ray—and below, the midnight ocean broke into unnumbered sparkles of living light. You might see the yellow sands, far and wide, curving around

ne cliffs; but, save these ruins, there was not house or cottage within the horizon. A little to the left of the abbey lies an old churchyard, with the bones of some score monks—merry dogs in their day!—rotting below. So the dead seemed our only welcomers. But not so; for now, as I turned to another part of the abbey, where the main tower yet stood, I beheld, brightly cresting that tower, and issuing from a long, low casement, half hid by the rank foliage, that pale and mystic light that we had seen afar. And now, too, outbroke a chorus of laughter—and just as it ceased, a sweet, soft voice commenced a song, in some language unfamiliar to me, but which the Devil—wiping his eyes and declaring it was very affecting, for it came from his native land—assured me was the purest Scotch.

The song ceased; and music of a thousand sorts followed. "I can bear it no longer," cried Asmodeus—and he went bang through the window, and I after him.

"Ho! ho!—what alarms you? Stay!—Kosem Kesamim—all hail! Stay, ladies, can you not?—what a pothor! Frightened at an old friend?—it is only Asmodeus. And look you, ladies, he hath brought you a man, a young man—at once courageous and discreet—for a visitor."

While Asmodeus was thus speaking, I had seized the hand of a most buxom looking Witch of about thirty-five, very well shaped, but clad in the dress of Queen Anne's time; and while I endeavoured to reassure her fears, I stole a glance round the chamber and its scattered circle.

It was a low, oblong apartment; from some vast pine-logs in the hearth broke the light I have before described, serving the party at once for warmth and lustre. In the centre of the room was a table, covered with provisions of a most goodly aspect; neither were wines wanting, for Witches are not a bit less careful of themselves than any other ladies of respectability. There might be around this table some eighteen women assembled, of all ages, from twenty to—eternity, for aught I could tell, from their seeming; for some three or four, to use Wordsworth's phrase, looked "immeasurably old." Centuries seemed buried in their furrowed brows, and glassy but most meaning eyes. These were dressed in no garb, and after no fashion, of which any history or legend, that I know of,

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gives a distinct description. It was fold after fold of serge-like drapery—in colour, either black or the coldest white—and falling down without outline or intelligible shape, like some dream-like and undefined shadow. Each of these elder women wore on her breast a crescent of burning red; it seemed as if the stones were of a fixed fire—this was their only ornament.

These women, I noted, were not the least disturbed at our approach; they remained in their former postures, turning only their passionless and unutterable aspect towards us, and each signing a grave and silent welcome to Asmodeus. But the younger ones, who, perhaps, were so inexperienced that they had never seen a Devil before—all uttering the prettiest shrieks imaginable, started from their places, and half-flying, half-arrested by Asmodeus's address, made a *tableau* that would cut the Rent Day off with a sixpence, if some generous manager could but bribe Asmodeus or myself to embody it. But my chief object—as I know that in all female societies the value of gentlemen, like that of strawberries at Christmas, is in proportion to their scarceness—in taking a *coup-d'œil* of the room, was to ascertain if any young wizards were of the party. At first I detected nothing male whatsoever except the new comers, till my eye fell suddenly on a figure that sat at the head of the table enveloped in a mass of shade from which even the bright steady light of the hearth shrank as if either in loathing or in dismay. Whether male or female, human or preter-human, I knew not at that moment, till, as it rose, I could, through the dense thickness of air that encircled the figure, behold the shape and outline of a man. "Kosem Kesamim," quoth Asmodeus, turning very respectfully to this figure, as he now saw general order about to be returned, "all hail! a young aspirant after the dim, the shadowy, the afar, comes with me to visit thee and thy servants on this their appointed meeting. Judge him not wholly, O Kosem, by the company he keeps,—for I am a great deal too good for him."

The witches, the young ones I mean, laughed; and as I could not altogether gainsay the Devil, I pretended not to hear him, and went on complimenting the buxom Witch, whom I guessed to be a widow.

"All are welcome to me, for in all there is knowledge!"

said a deep, a sad, a melodious voice, that thrilled through my bones, like a voice of some dead prophet whom a Hebrew might have convoked to prophesy of misfortunes. The figure resumed its seat, and this was the signal for the general return.

"My dear Mecassephahs, or rather Mecassephim," said Asmodeus, addressing the ladies, (for that word, as I afterwards learnt, is the proper appellation of Witches,) I am most delighted once more to see you. Azna, my darling, a glass of wine. Bosniah, shall I help you from this dish? the truffles look excellent. Pray, Jesthah, take care of my young friend."

To it now we all went, and I assure you I never saw a more excellent supper—those Witches know what's what, my dear Lord Guloaseton, better than any ladies I've seen for a long time. What a mistake to suppose they eat newts and murdered men's fingers!—vulgar prejudices altogether—just as philosophers are supposed to live upon water-cresses, as if knowledge, whether in witch or philosopher, did not mean us to find the best sources of enjoyment. Oh, the chatter, the clatter, the talk, the laughter, the hob-a-nobbing of glasses, the ringing of plates, (best *Sèvre*, I give you my word, for I looked at the mark)—we grew as intimate as if we were a set of old wits at Madame du Deffand's;—always excepting the elderly ladies I have before respectfully touched upon, and Kosem Kesamim at the head of the table. These ate not, drank not, spake not; they resembled the ghastly images introduced by the Ægyptians at their feasts; and like them, too, did not prevent the feast from being as jovial as if they were only the figures set on a plateau. I made great progress in the good graces of Mrs. Jesthah; she was an Englishwoman, as it happened, for most of those present were of other countries, and could only converse with me by the eyes.

"Do you come from London?" said Jesthah, smiling very graciously.

"From London," I repeated; "is it long since your Ladyship has been there?"

"Ah, you have discovered my rank then?"

"Pardon me—I only guessed it."

"Humph! ay, it is some 120 years since I was in Town—is it still a very gay place? Drums every night? Do ladies still patch according to their politics? And, oh! the dear

playhouse! Who is the rage now? What handsome actor? What young dramatic author? Still I suppose you have produced nothing equal to Mr. Addison's Cato—and of course it is regularly played twice a week; but, bless me!—Ah, forgive me! are you of the—of the—pardon me—the—the Great World? the men *d-la-mode*?—you wear no wig, and I don't see a bit of gold lace about you."

"Madam, my pedigree is sufficiently long, and my income sufficiently easy, to make me ordinarily styled a gentleman. Other qualities to earn that title are not considered, in my time, to be more than elegant superfluities. But swords are worn only by the clerks of the Parliament Houses; and as for gold, we are a great deal too scarce in that metal to waste it upon the outside of our clothes. And you really have not been in Town since the reign of Queen Anne—do you live in this Abbey? not a pleasant winter residence, I should think."

"*O ciel!* no," cried the Lady, fanning herself coquettishly, "I should die of the vapours. I—But hold!—you are not yet privileged to know of my residence: some time or other, if you conduct yourself decently, you may have leave to visit me."

"I live in hope; but—a glass of champagne? So, so! forgive me! are you really a Witch? I own the fascination; but you don't look like the Witches one sees on the stage."

"Nevertheless," returned Jesthah, laughing, as she helped herself to some lobster salad, I am a very good Witch, and can sail over the sea in a walnut-shell as well as any old woman that ever was burned."

"Pray, Madam," said I, after expressing my surprise at this boast, "are these all the witches now extant? if so, which are the three ladies who figure in Macbeth?"

"Oh, dead! dead!" returned Jesthah, lifting up her hands, "they died of rage at reading the frights William Shakspeare has made of them. Between you and me (here my comrade sank her voice into a whisper), they were exceedingly vain old creatures; and the scandal *is* (great emphasis on the last monosyllable), that they all pulled caps for Macbeth."

Here the mirth round Asmodeus became quite obstreperous, and I took advantage of the general uproar to ask

Jesthah, *sotto voce*, if the dark figure that had welcomed me—was the Prince of Evil?

"Hist, no!" returned she, in the same key; "he is human, like yourself; he is the most powerful wizard that ever existed, and none know the hour of his birth, or the country in which he was born."

I looked wistfully towards the figure, but the darkness that settled round it when in repose, baffled my keenest gaze.

And now the supper was done—now the glasses circulated more rapidly—now the clamour thickened—now I and my Witch were making serious love—when once more rose the unearthly voice of Kosem Kesamim, and silence fell round us, chill and hushed, like a sudden snow. "Stranger," it said, "there are signs and types of a change in the world—are they so understood—so construed by the herd? Speak! I know all that is at work; but what you as spectator of the workings, or it may be as one of the million agents that conscious or unknowing of the ministry, minister to a solemn end—what *you* feel, and believe, and prophesy of events—*that*—solicitous of learning what passes in the hearts of men—that would I learn. Speak!"

"O Kosem Kesamim, (pardon me if I pronounce not your name after the true witchly fashion,) O Kosem Kesamim, I come only from that hive of London, in which I have been a bee of very industrious habits; but as far as I have had time for observation, I should say that at this moment the great business of the swarm is a quarrel between the bees and the drones. Certainly, O Kosem, to drop metaphor, and speak plainly, certainly, however, there is much in the aspect of present things to amuse, to surprise, and to appal the human and unwizarded beholder. In the first place I see a vast number of gay, well-dressed, fine-looking persons going about to balls and soirées, as if they were living in the most peaceful times imaginable; nevertheless even among *them* you may notice changes and heraldries of change; their amusements want the *system* which once pervaded them; they seem more broken and desultory, as if taken by snatches, rather than uninterruptedly pursued. The Opera is wretched; balls are *fade* and dull; Lady Patronesses are becoming like other women; and respect for Almack's is prodigiously shaken; the dynasty of Dandies is fast expiring; and in a word, the

idle ones of the Silken Circle begin to feel that a time is ripening when the staple of life will not be amusement for the few and famine for the many. If the heaving of the elements in social arrangements be visible among the higher grades, it is nothing to the vast spirit that moves slowly through the heart of the multitude. Human ingenuity exercised on one point grows sharpened on others; there is not so much difference as the world would suppose between the mechanism of a steam-engine and the mechanism of a government; in either, complicated and cumbrous are the first steps to knowledge—to progress is to simplify. Thus among the working men of our great cities, questions of deep and mighty import, which hitherto have been reserved for philosophers to discuss, are sternly and solemnly debated: the true foundations of society—the origin of ranks—the distribution of property—the two great interrogatories, *what is Virtue, and what is Government?*—these are the subject-matter of men thoughtful at the loom. And while the upper grades avoid such matters as dull—despise them as theoretic—and damn them as dangerous; the time and the hour are at hand when to those questions—answers will be demanded. In fact (it is in vain to disguise it) *social Reform* must close the vista of legislative Reforms; and if, O Kosem Kesamim! I could but live to a quarter of the age of this fair lady beside me (she *owns* to a hundred and twenty), I should live to see things that would petrify my little Lord John on the Treasury Bench, and take all the starch from the neck of the handsome Sir Jamie. As for the middle orders, I am apt to think we attribute a vast deal too much to their influence in times of danger. In times of quiet they are all in all; they form the solidity—the gravamen of the social order. In times of peril they shut up their houses and remain neutral; they are timid and wavering; they don't like to disoblige their customers; they are afraid of a run on the Banks; the row in the streets is no business of theirs; they hope matters will soon be amicably adjusted; and retire to read the newspapers in the back parlour. But this is the case rather in the Metropolis than in the other towns, where the middle orders have a more complete admixture with the lower, and where the system of credit has not made them so dependant on quiet times and the aristocracy! While, O Kosem, I thus rapidly run over the state of feeling amongst us, I must not forget

some curious detached pictures. There is a Minister, who, with the greatest courage in the world, made up his mind to endure the hatred of half his order, and who can't make up his mind to preserve the whole—who made up his mind to risk place, power, and honour, who can't make up his mind to ensure them—who made up his mind to the excitement, the agitation, the ferment of all England, who can't make up his mind to the security—who made up his mind to peril, who can't make up his mind to triumph—who made up his mind to all the toil, obloquy, difficulty, uproar of a great enterprise, and who stands shivering with horror at the thought of achieving its reward. We have an august assembly worthy of this notable irresolution in the Premier, and who, not the least dismayed at the prospect of the House of Lords being swept away, are aghast at the thought of its being increased. We have, yet stranger than this spectacle, a House of Commons faithful to the people, and triumphantly asserting its own corruption. We have, too, in that House of Commons, in the nineteenth century, an inspired and pensioned prophet, who bullies six hundred and odd sensible men into appointing a Fast-day against their understandings, and who thinks God is excessively angry with us for trying to terminate a system of perjury and an organization of fraud; and above all, we have a set of fanatics who think that the prophet ought not to be sent to Bedlam! We have a conservative party which talks of putting Sir Henry Hardinge at the head of an army, and would ensure a general peace by means of an universal convulsion. O Kosem Kesamim, from these hints you may gather that while Wisdom is at work within the depths of society, Folly still floats, shaking her bells, upon the surface, and that, as in former ages of the world, the doubt, the anger, the petulance, the inaptitude of the minions of Accident are more conspicuous, than the steady and unregarded dictates of Wisdom, and the prejudices of a handful of men more consulted than the welfare of millions.

No. IV.

Unexpected Hospitality.—A change of scene.—The Cell.—The Wonders of the Inner World.—A Voyage of Discovery beyond the North Pole.—Conversation with Kosem Kesamim.—The Ear of the Earth, and Him that sitteth by it.—*The Nameless*.—The City of Cyprolis.—The buried of Forty Centuries.—Dressing-room of a dandy, four thousand years back.—Breakfast, and Asmodeus instead of a Newspaper.—Mrs. Trollope's America.—Conventional, and Mental Vulgarity.—Göthe.—The Effect produced by Wilhelm Meister.—The House of Lords and the Bill.—The Waverers.—The suddenness of the new light to Lords Harrowby and Wharnccliffe.—The Bill seen with different eyes.—Duke of Wellington's Protest.—Horror of the Lords at being supposed capable of writing.—Lord Durham's accusation against the "pamphleteering slang" of the Bishop of Exeter.—The Duke of Newcastle's new work.—The Cholera falsely accused.—A late melancholy event—moralized on.—Men like Perches.—General Remarks.—The Breakfast concluded.

WHEN I had finished my narration of our doings in England, Kosem Kesamim said in a melancholy voice:—

"Thou speakest, O man! of the more vulgar concerns of life, which thy race have so falsely deemed the more important. Thou tellest us of the vain policy of states; thou speakest of the outward signs of change: but of the Deep River of Events that floweth within, dark and hidden, thou art silent, save by hints, or it may be a chance approach. Yet he that liveth only with the world, thinketh with the world also. Thou wilt be wiser when thou hast sojourned with us some time."

"Some time!" echoed I, smitten with alarm; "your Highness is exceedingly obliging; but I am not provided even with a change of clothes, and business of vast importance summons me to town. Nay, I fear it is already time to depart."

"Not so," answered the mysterious Amphitryon; "has not Asmodeus explained to thee our customs:—he who visits our court may not leave it for one calendar month. What, oh! music!"

And straightway, as if to cut off my reply, there arose—about, around, beneath, the most melodious sounds, so that I could almost have fancied myself at the Opera, as it was in the good old days, ere Mr. Monck Mason promised it should be better:—had not indignation and surprise cut short my disposition to be delighted, and, shaking my hand

at Asmodeus, I told him across the table, that I considered he had deceived me.

"Peace!" said Jesthah reproachfully, "am I, then, so disagreeable to thee? Canst thou not stay with me one little month?"

Fearful visions shot across me; I thought of Burgher's Leonora, of ghost-loves, and bed-chambers on the ground floor. I looked very wistfully in Jesthah's face, but I saw nothing of the spectre in its fair, round, smiling proportions, and accordingly I answered, with a deep sigh:—

"Ah! Madam, a month in London would be a moment by your side; but, shall I confess? a prospect of staying in this Abbey a little freezes my ardour—I am very subject to colds and——"

"You mistake," interrupted Jesthah, "you will not have to stay in this Abbey; we shall transport you to the most delicious residence."

Alas! thought I, I am fairly in for it; I know what these promises mean; I have not read German for nothing; I am certainly a lost man. "And this residence is—e-hem!—doubtless very well known to my friend the Devil!"

"Nay, he has no power to enter it, unless by special permission."

"Madam!" I exclaimed with enthusiasm, "I am quite at your service then."

Here the music slowly ceased, and a soft stupour suddenly grew over my eyes—a drowsiness like that produced by some great preacher seized me, and even with Jesthah's hand in mine, I fell into a most profound slumber.

When I woke, I found myself alone in a sort of cell formed of the most brilliant spars. A vast, but continuous and steady noise, as of the march of a mighty sea, sounded in my ears—a voice of inexpressible power, depth, and intensity. I was awed, but not startled. I rose gradually from the rude couch on which I was lying, and gazed round. Through an aperture in my cell, I caught the perspective of gigantic arches and mighty columns of some rough and gloomy substance which I did not recognize as familiar. A vague, silent alarm seized me. I rose, and cautiously quitting my cave, looked forth on the scene without. Wonderful! far as I could see, stupendous halls, arches whose height soared aloft into dim and impenetrable

show—courts opening one into the other, thousands and tens of thousands, with areas in which cities might have stood—stretched in solemn and deep solitude around me. Every where gloomed the majesty of immeasurable space: it seemed the sepulchre of some giant world. And now, as my steps involuntarily glided on, millions of rills and waterfalls broke down the dark sides of the mighty walls around me: this seemed to account for the sound that had so appalled me. There was no heaven above this vast domain. My eye penetrated far, far as the eagle might soar, but still rose the rocks and walls around me, shadow their only roof and canopy. This new world, for such it seemed to me, was lighted by strange, unsteady fires, that flashed, danced, and crept around the pillars and crags at close intervals; and these playing against the waters that rolled or glided down the steepes, gave forth a changeful, but ruby-like and universal glow.

“Is this enchantment?” said I, inly, “or is it the Dread World of Death?”

The ground beneath me was rough and uneven, and looking down I beheld large fragments of gold and silver ore. Was it possible that I was in some mighty mine as yet undiscovered by human avarice? While I asked myself this question, from a dim, sulphureous cave, at a little distance beyond, over which a dull smoke simmered, as it were, there suddenly burst forth a column of dazzling fire, and soared rapidly aloft, like some wonderful fountain of flame, higher and higher, till it illumined the whole gigantic space around; and looking up, I beheld it disappear through another dark aperture in an opposite wall. But still the cavern continued to pour forth, pile after pile of this deep, and it almost seemed, solid flame, and still pile after pile wound regularly through the aperture above, emerging and vanishing like the defiles of a demon army.

“Thus *Ætna* is supplied,” said a voice at my side. I turned hastily, and beheld the dark figure of Kosem Kesamim, all unrelieved by the lurid glow that played on all else—dull, shadowy, and indistinct, as if seen at a distance by the uncertain twilight; yet was he within touch of my head, and the red light of unnumbered fires burnt fiercely round him.

“Fear not,” said that mournful and solemn voice, “knowest thou on what spot we stand?”

"Great Enchanter, no!"

"It is a spot where fear should be unknown, though awe may wake; for here crime and war, and man's guilty deeds, have come not since eternity. This is the Centre of the Earth. Behold the womb of the round world! Is it not a goodly palace? Shrink not the petty rocks and towers that crown its surface, into mole-hills and bull-rushes, beside its stately walls and immeasurable arches? In this gigantic laboratory all the operations of Nature perform their everlasting course. Here, around the arch secret of our orb; here, around the magnet which makes our affinity with the stars, and holds the solid earth on its airy axis; here are the seeds and germs of all things—the elements of elements. This is the Hades of Earth—the dark Reign of Shadow—the Mystery of Mysteries—the Wheel of the Vast Machine—the Mother that bears—the Grave that concealeth all! Welcome, stranger! I—human, like thyself, alone with thee in these awful depths—I bid thee welcome." Thereat a coldness and chill penetrated into my marrow, although my heart beat with a wild exulting joy to find myself thus privileged above my race. I bowed down my head, and after a pause, in which I endeavoured to nerve and to collect myself, I replied:—

"Dark and mysterious Shade! I know not well in what words to answer thee; for I cannot persuade myself that I do not dream. From that gay, light, wild revel of last night, how drear and solemn a transition! Something in my adventures hitherto has been human and familiar. I might imagine Asmodeus of my own race, and the witches of my own flesh. These occasioned me the surprise of amusement, not the marvel of awe. I am past the growth of mind when curiosity or fear is powerful; and I have known enough of mortal friendships not to be very much alarmed at having a devil for a companion; but now my heart is at once roused and appalled. Tell me, O magician! where are those whom I saw yesternight? Do they, too, inhabit these realms, or were they but creatures raised by thy wand—gay yet grotesque delusions, the incongruous but not terrible beings of a dream,—but thou of that dream the mystic and mighty God, moved not, relaxing not, at the fantastic mirth of the phantoms thou createdst?"

"They thou speakest of," replied Kosem Kesamim, "*are* yet palpable and living, as they seemed to thee; but their

homes penetrate not into these stern recesses. They hold the purlicus of the temple, but their steps cross not the veil."

"And why, Enchanter, am I distinguished above them?"

"Because thou dardest more. Thou wouldst cross an ocean of fire for a novelty on the other shore; and in this temper I recognize what once was my own. The key to all mysteries is the thirst to discover: the search for novelty is the invention of truth."

"But how comes it, O Kosem Kesamim, that these ladies ever arrived at the dignity of witchcraft? Some of them, I grant, silent and weird, looked fitting receptacles for such solemn gifts of the spirit; but my buxom coquette, my lively Jesthah, appears somewhat too earthly a lamp for so preternatural a light."

"Ask not these questions now," replied the sad voice, that dampened, as it spoke, my returning vivacity; "but while yet in these hoar recesses, summon thy graver powers to seize advantage of the occasions offered them."

"I am prepared," said I, in a subdued tone, "for all thou canst show me."

We moved on silently; but I found by the current of air that rushed against my face, and by the swiftness with which arch and column glided by, that some unseen power unconsciously winged my steps, and that our progress was suited to the mighty space that we traversed. And now we paused below a circular chasm in the rocks, that seemed to rise spirally and lessening upward; and from this chasm I heard a wild and loud hubbub, but no distinct sound.

"Is this the Cavern of the Winds?" said I, stunned by the mingled uproar.

"This is as the Ear of the Earth," replied the Enchanter, "and through this channel come down all the tidings of the million tribes of mankind. From the first breath in Paradise, from the first whisper of Eve's virgin love—from the first murmur of Adam's repenting soul, to the universal clamour of contending interests, crimes, and passions that now agitate the crowded world—all come mellowed and separate down, confused, indeed, to thy ear, but distinct and intelligible to that Being which the sounds are destined to reach and guide."

"And who is that Being?" said I, wonderingly.

"Look yonder!" answered Kesamim, raising his shadowy arm,

I looked in the quarter to which he pointed, and beheld, on a Throne of grey stone, gigantic, motionless—an aged Man, or rather a manlike Shape. His vast countenance was unutterably and dreadfully calm; his brows, like the Olympian Jove's, overhung his majestic features; but the orbs beneath were dull and lifeless—there was no ray in them.

“Is that death?” said I, shrinking back; “if so, it is the death of a god.”

“Look again,” said the deep voice of the magician, and I obeyed. Then I saw that around him—so that he sat, as it were, in the midst—was a web of numberless fine and subtle threads, the ends of which disappeared among the million apertures round, pores, as it were, of the rock; and then as my eye, waxing bold, gazed more intently, I found, that with every hollow blast that descended momentarily from the upper world—his hands scarce moving, so quiet *was* the motion, touched some one or other of these meshes, and straight threads here and there snapped asunder, and the shape of the web changed, but slightly, and only in parts. Then saw I that the dulness of the eyes was not of Death, but Blindness.

“And who,” said I, within my breath, “is that dread old man?”

“He,” answered Kesamim, “who moves in blindness, but with method, the strings of the external world. He moves the puppets, men and kings: he snaps or weaves the meshes of life; he sends forth through those webs the electric orders to the lower delegates of the universe—the Monster King, whom you call Ocean, and the Spirit of the leaping Fires. He, so mute and worn with years, is yet the life and principle of the restless machine of earth. How far wise or gifted none know;—himself a mystery, he unravels none. And it is the dark, relentless, inscrutable office he wields, from which men, shuddering at the unseen power, have taken the dream of Destiny; and others, noting blindness amidst the power, have conceived the term of Chance. But he himself is *Nameless*.”

While I was yet gazing, I felt myself hurried on. The grey old man vanished gradually from my eyes, and the descent of the sounds of earth faded on my ear as the voice of a distant waterfall. We now travelled upward; and darting through one of the intricate chasms that yawned

on the side of a lofty rock, we glided on till a more cheerful light than that which had hitherto guided us, streamed down; and, making towards it, I suddenly found myself in a most beautiful city, not, indeed, vast and gloomy, like the nature-formed palaces I had just left, but a city built by human hands for human habitation. Theatres, circuses, squares, met me on every side. Yet still I noted that there was no heaven above, and that the light which illumined the place was from artificial sources; but they were rosy and cheerful lights, such as should look on the meetings of lovers, or the revelry of voluptuous gardens. And all around, the inscriptions on the walls, the shapes of the buildings, the fashion of the streets,—was unfamiliar, though evidently human. “And what, O Enchanter! what new wonder is this?”

But the Enchanter was gone, and by my side stood Asmodeus, helping his nose to a pinch of snuff.

“Your obedient servant, sir,” said the Devil coolly; “having looked at the figures of the dial so long, what think you now of the clockwork?”

“Asmodeus, is that really you? What a vision have I seen! But where is the Great Enchanter?”

“Gone! He loves not these lightsome abodes. Humanity in thine inferior shape will not bear, too long at a time, the solemn marvels to which thou hast been admitted. He has, therefore, kindly conducted thee hither, for a short respite, and will reveal to thee more of the stern secrets of his wisdom anon. Meanwhile, thou art in a city which an antiquary would give his ears to visit. Know, that above thee glows an eastern sun, and these stately buildings are not far beneath the surface of the Earth.”

“And is this the work of Kesamim?”

“The work of fiddlestick!” replied Asmodeus, tartly,—“of mere vulgar mechanics, some four thousand years ago. At some short distance from the spot on which this city formerly stood, is a lofty mountain, once a volcano; but the flames have been dried these thirty centuries, and this city, in an hour of revelry and feasting, became its prey. The camels of the traveller pass over it; none (not even tradition) know what hath been. This is no vulgar Pompeii, no hacknied Herculaneum. It is a treasure known but to us and our agreeable friends the witches.”

"Ha! then they reside here: upon my word, they have excellent taste."

"And," continued the Devil, entering a very pretty bachelor sort of house, "these are your lodgings. I have set out your dressing-table for you, and brought over your wardrobe on the soul of the Duke of B——'s shoulders—big enough to carry anything."

"Excellent Devil!"

And a very pretty dressing-room it was:—there were dandies in those days! A bath room of white marble, a mirror of polished steel, balconies filled with vases of bronze, tables on which curling-tongs, pincers, paint-pots, and wax for the eyebrows, a little hardened by age, made a part of the scene. One might have thought oneself in the boudoir of the Duchess de —.

"You have made a mistake, Mody: this must have been a lady's apartments."

"Ah, no! I remember the owner well—a great friend of mine—such a *beau garçon*! He was just dyeing his hair a light green (the fashionable colour at that day,) when the flood burst over him. But while you are eating your breakfast—the witches always send one of their band to market for dainties in the Palais Royale? you remember that corner shop?—while you are eating your breakfast, (you see it is very comfortably set in the niche by the window,) shall I tell you the news of the upper earth?"

"Especially of London; but tell me, how came you here? Jesthah informed me that you required a special permission; did you receive it, and from whom?"

"Jesthah told you right. I was summoned by Kosem Kesamim from a house at Cincinnati, where Mrs. Trollope's book on America had just arrived."

"Ah! a droll book enough, but full of absurdities. A work like Mrs. Trollope's resembles a pantaloon's acting; one laughs at the tricks, but one would not do them oneself for the world. It is the sort of approbation that belongs to contempt; and the more one is amused, the more one despises the source of the amusement."

"The Americans say that they would not receive very cordially a lady travelling with Miss Wright, who, in the midst of a nation particularly starched on the affairs of the sex, preached up the absurdity of marriages: so that her abuse, according to them, is only retaliation."

"And it is only the more ordinary ranks whose manners the good lady thinks vulgar. (Open the Chablis, old fellow!) She allows that the *elegants* preserved a mysterious exclusiveness; so that, in fact, it is those classes who, in England, would be wringing their souls out at their fingers' ends in a retail trade of candles, soap, pepper, mousetraps, and other sweetmeats, to pay their rent, their bills, and their taxes, whom she finds living well, talking big, and going to balls, and instead of being surprised at their prosperity, she is surprised at their vulgarity. Now, if you, Asmodeus, were to sit down and describe the domestic habits of Wapping and Shoreditch, and then call the book 'England,' you would go hard on out-trolloping Trollope herself."

"But," said Asmodeus sneeringly, "no free States ever do enjoy the grace of manner that belongs to despotic ones. The English seemed as rude to the Old French as Mrs. Trollope's Americans to the most fastidious English."

"Right," said I, "nations alone are judges of their own conventional manners—one nation cannot censure another. The lively Frenchman seems the most vulgar of all animals to the solemn Turk. Vulgarity of *mind*, not of manners, is the only vulgarity which a people can charge against their neighbours.* Mrs. Trollope accuses the Americans

* It is rather singular that about the very time there appears among us Mrs. Trollope's English attack on American manners, a much finer (and a much cleverer) person than Mrs. Trollope, Prince Puckler Muskau, has published a work equally severe upon *our* want of breeding and manners. In fine it is impossible for any traveller to be an *arbiter elegantiarum* to any country but his own. The Frenchman spitting into a handkerchief held at arm's length, is to us the acme of vulgarity. The Englishman, with a coat skirt under each arm, basking and soothing his "rereward man," by the fire which he carefully conceals from the ladies he is flirting with, seems equally monstrous to the Frenchman. We called George IV. the finest gentleman in Europe, and the allied Sovereigns when in London thought him the essence of *mauvais ton*. There is a very good example of the difference between conventional and real, *i.e.* mental vulgarity, in the *Memoirs* of Sir James Campbell lately published. Sir James visits Voltaire, not, he has the curious hardihood to admit, in order to admire the man, but to shoot over the man's preserves. "One day at table, Voltaire, in cutting up a partridge, first thrust his fork into it, and then put the fork into his mouth, apparently to ascertain if the *fumette* was as he would have it. He then cut it up and sent a part of it to me, (Sir James ;) I sent it away without eating of it, and on his asking the reason, *I told him the true one, without any circumlocution*, that in carving the partridge, he had used a fork which had just been in his own mouth." Here is the conventional vulgarity in Voltaire,—very disagreeable, but that designs no rudeness; and here in the poor little stranger, the proudest day of whose life ought to have been that in which he saw the Lord of Ferney, is the mental vulgarity that wantonly insults. But we have not yet done with our example. Voltaire, so far from thinking the ill-

of this vulgarity, but in vain. The very rudeness of their equality belies the charge, (mental vulgarity is always servile to wealth,) and the purity of their political idols proves a certain largeness of mind. No vulgar souls could appreciate Franklin, or adore Washington. The true vulgarity—that is, mental smallness, is in Mrs. Trollope herself. The Americans point to their cities—their senate—their public institutions—their cheap food—their universal education—and Mrs. Trollope says the men sup in one room, and the women in another. They point to the Colossus, and Mrs. Trollope sneers at the ring on its little finger!

“Never mind her nonsense,” said the Devil yawning, “but prepare for news—Göthe is dead.”

“Dead—the Great Spirit gone!”

“And the ‘Atlas’* newspaper says he was but a very poor creature after all.”

“What wonderful stores has he left behind him! every work illumining a separate train of thought. ‘Werther,’ ‘Wilhelm Meister,’ ‘Faust.’ How different—how mighty each!”

“Nevertheless,” said Asmodeus, “the ‘Wilhelm Meister’ is a wonderfully stupid novel.”

“What an effect it produced on me!—what a new world it opens. You read the book, and you wonder why you admire it. When you have finished it, you find yourself enriched: it is like a quiet stream that carries gold with it—the stream passes away insensibly, but the gold remains to tell where it has been. This is the great merit of the

breeding lay at his door, replies with a sardonic laugh, “that *the English* were a strange people, and had singular customs!” So much for the judgment one country forms of the manners of another. But to go on with our parallel: “*This little scene*,” says Sir James Campbell, with all the innocent exultation of the true Jeremy Diddler, “*however, did not prevent me from occasionally dining with him, or from shooting over his estate.*” No, we’ll be sworn it did not; and in that remark lies the very soul of mental vulgarity chuckling over the wit of its own littleness.

* What could induce the able editor of the “Atlas” to admit so very discreditable an attack on Göthe as the one alluded to in the text? Can he suppose that the man who changed the whole literature of Germany, perhaps of Europe, was not a genius of the highest order? We are sorry, by the way, to find our contemporary stand forth as the champion for the Taxes on Knowledge. He has been already so fully answered in the “Examiner” and the “True Sun,” that we shall not at present revert to his arguments; but we think sufficiently well of his Journal, despite, by the way, of certain slighting remarks on ourself, that we shall hope to see a treble sale of it when the said taxes are removed, as a practical reply to his anticipations.

books of the German masters—ineffective in parts, the effect as a whole is wonderfully deep. 'Wilhelm Meister' is to the knowledge of thoughts what 'Gil Blas' is to knowledge of the world. Peace to the ashes of a man that has left no equal! What next?"

"The House of Lords were up at seven o'clock in the morning for the good of their country! We shall never hear the end of it."

"And the Bill?"

"Floated off by nine little drops."

"And the New Peers?"

"Fructifying still in Lord Grey's pocket."

"And the Waverers?"—

"Made speeches on this Bill, in which they answered their objections to the other. The universal wonder is, why the light that has visited Lord Wharnccliffe's and Lord Harrowby's eyes did not deign to visit them long before. The newspapers, with Mr. Radical in the midst of them, tell the people to be excessively grateful to these two individuals—as if to do good to the people through necessity were a greater favour than doing them good through choice. The people are not such fools, and consider tardy kindness as mammon wisdom. But what a strange House—the House of Lords is! Here is a question exactly the same now as it was some few months ago, and yet this notable Assembly have put on their spectacles, and declared it quite a different thing. They sent the Bill, when the Commons were first delivered of the Brat, out of their House, and now declare it has been changed at nurse! Good easy gossips! How the world laughs in its sleeve at them! They put me in mind of the city sparks in some London Tavern, who send away the bottle of bad port in order to seem fine; and when the waiter, with a grave face, brings them back exactly the same bottle, they shake their wise noddles at each other, and say—"Ah, this is quite a different thing, waiter!"

"Did you see the Great Duke? How looked he?—lowering?"

"Nay, he smiled, Prometheus like, and has vented his wrath in a Protest—a sort of political kite—that is to go to posterity charged with the Duke's wisdom, and a long tail of small names pinned to the end of it; a proof, as it were, how many silly little men were hereditary legislators

in the reign of William IV. But there was one thing that delighted me in the debate—the rage the good Lords were in at being supposed capable of any intellectual effort. ‘I write for the newspapers!’ cries my Lord Durham in horror. ‘My son-in-law write for the Times!’ echoes the Premier. ‘What a calumny!’ says Lord Durham. ‘It is enough to agonize one,’ groans Lord Grey. ‘But,’ cries Lord Durham, collecting all his venom, and darting a fiery look at the poor Bishop of Exeter, ‘any libel is not too bad for a man who can write popular pamphlets.’ ‘Order! order!’ cries the House. ‘Take down his words.’ ‘Accuse a Bishop of writing good pamphlets!—horrible breach of privilege—to be supposed able to write decently. The noble Lords might spare themselves the trouble of denial. The ‘Times’ would not be worth abusing if their Lordships had much to do with it.”

“But there’s the Duke of Newcastle—has not he just committed a pamphlet?”

“Yes, to prove to the complete satisfaction of the Universe, that a Duke has not the remotest idea of English—’tis a type of the Peerage—sounding and brainless.”*

“Oh, Asmodeus! sometimes I think thee a Tory, sometimes a Whig. Which art thou?”

“Sir! would you insult me?—is it not bad enough to be a devil?”

“Well, and the cholera?”—

“Amusing itself in Paris, and listening to false accusations in London. Everything is laid to the poor cholera’s charge. There was a still-room maid died of having Lady Holland for a mistress—a very natural death, and of course it is the cholera that killed her.”

“Ah,” said I, “died of Hollands—those ardent spirits are worse than the cholera; but his Lordship, at least, must be confessed to be weak enough.”

“And what else?”—

“A fine mind is grown darkened—a more interesting sight to some people than all the vulgar squabbles of States. Oh, it is a strange spectacle to see shadow after shadow darkening over the human Temple, until the light is quenched at the altar, and the Priest passed from the

* [The gibes of the hour in depreciation of the intellectual capacity of the House of Lords were here, it will be remarked, put ironically by the author into the mouth of—a Devil.]

aisle, and the blind bat, and the birds of night cower and brood over the Holy of Holies, gibbering, and wild, and flitting restlessly to and fro. But this was a mind I have marked from its youth upwards, and seen the germ of the deadly tree slowly—slowly unfold. When the crowd laughed at the wit, I was by, and saw that the shaft came from a loosened bow; when the crowd whispered, and spake of ‘humours,’ I was by, and knew that the start and the mutter were of the brain’s disease. And now I have mixed in the mob of the time-servers, and seen what pity a man who feasts, and shines on, them, can glean. ‘Poor man! very shocking, and I dined there last month; but he was always disagreeable.’ It is a fierce moral, when some great Woe darts into lofty houses, singles out some one whom Fortune honours, Genius serves—often in the mouths of men, and bids him come forth from his greatness, and walk with the Lazars of mankind—it is a fierce moral, but none heed it. Men,” said the Devil, sinking into his familiar vileness of jesting, “men are like perches; one may pull you out by dozens without your taking the slightest alarm at the fate of your comrades. As for all the rest of the world, things go on much the same as before: Whenever Ministers are embarrassed by an awkward motion, they don’t make a House; and when a Member, seeing his motion thus scattered to the winds, ventures to complain, Lord Palmerston affects the supercilious, and assures him that himself and his motion are ‘not of the slightest importance to the public.’ People go to the theatres, and Charles Kemble acts *Macbeth*. Lord Mulgrave has written a novel, which I intend to read aloud to the ladies of Cypropolis, (so this city is called,) for which no doubt his brother Lords think him especially unfitted to go out to Jamaica. To be at all clever is to be uncalculated for public service. Statesmen of the true red box calibre catch places as oysters catch pearls, by sitting quietly and gaping for them. Meanwhile there are Easter holidays in London; and people are striving to amuse themselves a little in the intervals of politics—much with the same success as the German who jumped out of the window, exclaiming ruefully—‘See how I am trying to be lively!’”

“Thanks, my good Devil, enough for the present; my breakfast is finished—my toilet arranged—lend me your arm. So, so! let us make our bow to the Witches.”

No. V.

My Life at Cyprolis.—What is real?—What not?—Knowledge a series of Plagiarisms.—New books.—Maid of Elvar.—Contarini Fleming.—The King's Theatre, and Robert the Devil.—The Cheap Press.—The Penny Magazine.—Fairness of the operations of Stamp Duty.—Motion against the Taxes on Knowledge.—Monopoly.—American Papers.—Objections answered.—Postage.—The "Original," &c. &c.—Koscm Kesamim.—His nature.—Particulars about the Witches.—Custom and Mystery.—Curiosity likely to be gratified.

I FIND, dear reader, that narrating my adventures to you only once a month, and sometimes not so often—I am forced to leave frequent gaps in my recital. It requires a long stride to keep up with the March of Events, and to talk to you only on those matters which are either interesting at all times, or interesting from their connection with the moment. How much then must I omit!—What scenes with my dear Witches!—What delightful hours with my beloved Jesthah!—Yes, reader, I still remain in that old buried City, with its gigantic arches, and porphyry temples, and silent fountains, and unechoing areas. Every evening is spent with the Witches, in the most agreeable rattling conversation, over the romance, the anecdote, the scandal of the past. Such stories are ripped up, that Time had stowed away in his budget, never dreaming they could again be routed forth into day—the amours of all Courts, from the Egyptian Ptolemies to the English Anne, (for no Witch had been enrolled in the free list at Cyprolis since the latter period) are detailed to me with the most refreshing earnestness! I listen, shrug my shoulders, swear the world was very bad in those days, and ask leave to teach Jesthah the last fashion in kissing. Happy hours! One man among so many ladies, though they be Witches, need be no Wizard to be a little in request. Happy hours!—I shall look back to you as a dream.—Yet you are realities, and I shall remember as much of you, as men ever remember of that past in which they once lived. I remember as much of you as a Rector does of Greek—as a Politician of the Public—as the World does of Virtue—as Virtue of the World;—yet how many silly people will say that I am deceiving them—that I never saw Jesthah—that I never

talked with Kosem Kesamim—that Asmodeus exists not—and that my life, my very life, my thoughtful, bustling, various life, is but a drop of ink, created by a goose-quill, and passed on no broader superficies than a sheet of paper! Alas, what is real if the mind be not? Is that which in the dim chambers of our decaying memory lies all mouldering and unheeded, more real, more palpable, more living than the bright creatures of our fancy? No! Fancy is a life itself, and the world we create has as much of truth as the world that was created for us. The all-merciful Father blessed us with imagination as a counterpoise to the sufferings of experience.

And every day I walk forth among those ruins, and, by the help of Witch-lore, decipher the language of four thousand years back, which is engraved on many a marble wall, and many an archived scroll. I here see how Wisdom has travelled from age to age—as a river that flows through our mortality—visible in its course—but in its sources undiscovered. For in these scrolls I behold the doctrines claimed by the Greeks—their beautiful thoughts—their high and endearing dreams, all bodied forth in the more luxuriant imagery of the East, and, indeed, they were rather simplified than enlarged by those bright purloiners, who stole from the Heaven of Fame the fire that belonged not to their race, but which so stolen never can expire.

And every morning to breakfast, previous to my adventurous roving, comes my attentive Demon, full of the news of the upper world, laden with books and journals, reports and truths—and making me as much conversant with the little squabbles on the world's surface, as if I were, as heretofore, a partner of them!—I recollect spending one morning deliciously over a whole cargo of new books. Beautiful "Maid of Elvar!"*—what pleasure did I owe to you! Reader, you love not Poetry, neither do I in general:—Like the taste for fruits—like the hungering after the sweet scent of flowers—like the quiet rapture of repose at noon, beneath the oak or beside the stream—like the delicious melancholy of the twilight, and that rosy star which once reminded us of how much love is blended by God with our harsher nature—like all the soft and magical delights that our youth nurst, and our manhood hastens to

* Maid of Elvar a Poem, by Allan Cunningham [who died ten years afterwards, on the 29th October, 1842.]—Moxon, 64, New Bond Street.

forget, the love of Poetry departs beneath the anxieties of life. Man's progress is an emblem of the progress of his race. At first the mountain and the free step, at last the city and the careful eye. But when such a Poem comes before you as the "Maid of Elvar," neglect it not, pause to inhale its beauty, as if it were a breeze of the fresh air. By a stanza from itself I will give you its own description.

"He came unto a small and pleasant bay—
A crescent-bay half garlanded with trees,
Which scented all the air; whose blossoms gay
Were rife with birds, and musical with bees;
And danced in beauty in the seaward breeze;
While o'er the grove ascended Elvar Tower,
A mark by land, a beacon on the seas—
With fruit trees crowned, and gardens hung in flower,
Dropt round with fairy knolls and many an elin bower."

Hark again, how beautiful a strain!—are not the glades before us?

"The ripe corn waved in lone Dalgonar glen,
That, with its bosom basking in the sun,
Lies like a bird; the hum of working men
Joins with the sound of streams that southward run,
With fragrant holms atween; then mix in one
Beside a church, and round two ancient towers
Form a deep fosse. Here sire is heired by son,
And war comes never: ankle deep in flowers
In summer walk its dames among the sunny bowers."

What richness—yet what simplicity in the line below marked in *Italics*!

—————"There was odorous store
Of bloom for bees; both bank and brae were sown
With glowing foxgloves and with gowans hoar;
A trout-stream shot through all, and sang beside the door."

All the Poet's descriptions are full of minute truth—nothing is vague, nothing is mere description—all is the result of close observing—that deep observing which marks the skilled eye of the Minstrel to whom

"In Nature there is nothing melancholy"—

and nothing homely. The same beauty which so strikingly characterizes Thomson—that knitting up word after word, into one chaplet of living representation—marks all the

rural descriptions of this thoroughly genuine and National Poet. Take, for instance, the following lines :

" The thatched stack-yard, the naked stubble ridge,
The sere leaves heaped, these all are certain signs
The fruitful season's o'er ; the leafless hedge
With songsters' nests revealed, tell now the reins
Of rule have passed to sterner hands : in chains
The lakes are bound, the forest trees are reeling
Beneath the axe : the snowy monarch reigns
On hills, and drives the shepherd from his shealing ;
And cold, like age on man, is o'er the wide land stealing.

* * * * *

The golden hours of the glad year are gone ;
The forest's fragrant plumes are pluck'd—how short,
And stormy, too, the journey of the sun ;
The vessel gladly makes her destined port ;
The hares unto the green kale-yards resort ;
The plough lies idle in the half-drawn furrow ;
The barnman's chaff comes down like snow ; his sport
The hunter takes ; the rabbit keeps his burrow ;
And old men shake their locks, and sigh 'tis winter thorough."

Yet it is a pity, that for a Poem so carefully elaborated—so deeply brooded over—so evidently formed for the Temple of Allan Cunningham's fame—so far greater than anything he has yet done—and so solidly great in itself—it is a pity that a metre should have been chosen which, though inexpressibly rich and melodious, has been so dinned into our ears by all the Poetasters of the last twenty years. The Music has grown wearisome from its commonness. Some years hence, the objection will cease to exist. Our children will not have read the numberless poems in the same metre that we have. The natural sweep of the verse will no longer be rendered "stale and cheap by vulgar company," but it may operate against the present popularity of a Poem which Scotland ought to feel proud of. It is essentially Scotch—essentially the Poetry of one Land and one People. We tread on the heaths of Scotland—we hear the rush of her streams—we see her lone glens and weird defiles as we wander on. Oh beautiful "Maid of Elvar!" —in a happy time wert thou born—thou belongest to the summer—and while the summer lasteth—I will turn to thee again and again, and wish for no sweeter companion in the basking noon—than the odours that breathe from thy russet garments !

It is strange, that in such stormy times, Literature should glide on so smoothly and with so many adventurers on the

stream! We are literally, if Asmodeus tells me right of the upper world, inundated with new books and new events. To-day we open the last novel; to-morrow we forget it in the last rumour! Here is "Contarini Fleming" * on the one hand, and the arrest of Chateaubriand on the other, both deserving of all our attention, and neither, therefore, engrossing it. Certainly Mr. Disraeli is a writer of very great genius, and "Contarini Fleming" is so vast an improvement on "Vivian Grey" and "The Young Duke," that it is difficult for me to believe it written by the same man. Nevertheless, the critics declare it could be written by no other. The tone of "The Young Duke" was painful: you felt that the Author should not have stooped to the performance; its vivacity was strained; its story unconnected; and the play of the writer's style too restless and unquiet. "Contarini Fleming" is the product of a far older mind—a travelled mind—a meditative mind—a mind gradually filtering itself of its early impurities of taste and discrepancies in judgment. The tone of it is more enlarged and benevolent than that of the former writings; and though, by the superficial, it is called extravagant, it is, in reality, remarkably succinct, whole, and uniform, in its plot, conduct, and purpose. The mass of readers will not perceive its object, and therefore it seems to them bizarre, merely because its meaning is not on the surface. In fact, "Contarini Fleming" is a delineation of abstract ideas, in which, as in "Wilhelm Meister," the Author is often allegorical and actual at the same time. Each character is a personification of certain trains of mind; but in that personification the Author now and then forgets himself, and deals only with the external world, which he designed at first merely as the covering to metaphysical creatures. I compare it, in this instance, to "Wilhelm Meister." And I am quite certain that if "Wilhelm Meister" had never been written, "Contarini Fleming" would never have walked into the ideal world. Yet, for all that, there is no imitation in story, character, and least of all, style. The subdued calm of Goethe is as different as possible from the varying brilliancy of the author of "Contarini Fleming." "Wilhelm Meister" is the mature produce of a very stupendous, brooding mind, that worked out the block of

* Contarini Fleming.—Murray.

nature from the most artificial and recondite tools. All in Goethe was the Artist—the great Artist—and all in “Wilhelm Meister” breathes of that Art, and of the time, thought, musing, which had been devoted to its cultivation. The true nature of Mr. Disraeli’s talents is, on the contrary, vivid, sparkling, passionate. He writes much better when he paints the Outward which belongs to Passion, than the Inward, which belongs to Thought. One of the best parts of his book, and one of the best and most racy descriptions of life any work of fiction since Fielding (certainly not excluding even “Anastasius”) contains, is in volume the first, when the young Adventurer attempts the robber life, which was once so alluring to the youth of Germany. On the other hand, nothing but the dazzle of the diction can blind us to various contradictions, and to much hasty paradox, in all the reflective portions of the work. Has Mr. Disraeli sufficiently studied Locke? No man should turn to the German philosophy till he is deep read in the English. Locke, above all, is the essential groundwork of speculation. That great Philosopher forms the right train of thought; shows, by a glance, where discursion leads to nothing, and where it is worth risking; he preserves us, in a word, from all errors but his own, or rather lights us to truth by a lamp which we afterwards turn back upon his own few contradictions and many deficiencies. But while Mr. Disraeli is, we apprehend, yet a novice when he reflects, he often becomes a master when he creates. His personifications of idea are excellent, though his dilations on ideas may be crude. What a character he has made of Winter! I know nothing in the English language like it in conception, or more elaborately executed: it is only a pity that we have so little of this fine ideal. To sum up, in this work the Author has shown a power—a fertility—a promise—which we sanguinely trust will produce very considerable and triumphant results. He has shown, by much improvement, that he can improve more. A certain revolution is going on within his mind; right and deep ideas are gradually banishing wrong and erratic notions; and—striking, admirable in many most brilliant points, as every unprejudiced critic must allow “Contarini Fleming”—the Author will yet (he may believe me) far outshine it. By the way, I see he is standing for Wycombe:—joy be with him! A man of such talent and such knowledge ought to

be in Parliament, more especially when the powers he possesses are pledged to the advance of those Great Truths which are now so firmly rooted in the Hearts of the People.

Thus half slowly criticizing, half carelessly rambling on, it is my custom to pore over the works which the Devil transports from the circulating libraries above. Sometimes, however, I prefer talking with my amusing companion over those circles which, to my great surprise, manage to flourish without me. I laugh at the indignation of Asmodeus, at the dreadful caricature they have made of his fellow Devil at the Opera House, where, Asmodeus assures me, that music without science, and a story without interest, are dragged on throughout a whole night under the name of "Robert the Devil."* "The scenery," says Asmodeus, "is well enough, I allow. But only imagine a performance lasting from eight to half-past twelve, without any *other* merit than scenery; the length of every scene, the interminable duration of every song seem to denote that they could not be contented to play the Devil without giving us a notion of the perpetuity of his punishments. What a moral! Certainly Mr. Mason must be the most conscientious man in the world! He has done more to weary London of the Devil than all his managerial brethren ever did to attract mankind towards the same personage. Oh! what a man it is! With what a spirit he goes on ruining the Opera! It is quite delightful to see a gentleman so bent upon one object. I suspect he is hired by some Prynné of the present day, to destroy insidiously the King's Theatre. No man could, by chance, have been so systematically unfit for his situation. Well, well; if the Town won't go to 'the Devil,' I know who is likely to supply the Town's place;"—and therewith Asmodeus made a note in his memorandum-book. For my part, I like this easy, worldly, sneering vein in the Devil's conversation; I like a companion who seems to have his senses about him, and who, though damned himself, knows exactly what ought to be damned in others.

One morning, among other papers, Asmodeus brought

* [Meyerbeer's grand opera of *Roberto il Diavolo*, was first produced in 1831, and in the following year was brought out on the boards of His Majesty's Opera House in the Haymarket by Mr. Monck Mason the then curiously unpopular, and eminently unsuccessful manager.]

me down a large cargo of the offspring of what is called the cheap press. What a fund of delight a man may now purchase for a shilling! One may pack up a library to take down to the moors, and have change out of half-a-crown. It is pleasant to see that while everything for the use of the outward form keeps up its price, something really cheap may be bought for the mind. A quartern loaf lasts a day, and costs 10*d.*, but a number of a new Magazine may give Thought food for a year, and costs only a penny. The Penny Magazine is indeed excellent so far as it goes, but there is something ludicrous in the delicate infelicity with which it coquets with the law. It seems so mighty anxious to avoid Politics, and yet it cannot avoid containing *news*. And news is as much against the law as politics. What absurdity—what monstrous absurdity! The law says “Intelligence” must not be sold under sevenpence. But our Lawgivers themselves sell Intelligence for a penny, and yet turn the Law upon others. The Society for the diffusion of Useful Knowledge have his Majesty’s Ministers for Members—they send out their own Penny Paper to-day, and prosecute another man’s Penny Paper to-morrow. I recollect Sir Robert Peel said once on the Game Laws—“Can a country gentleman officiate conscientiously as a Magistrate, and send a man to prison for breaking those laws which his own son breaks every day?” Is there not the same glaring partiality in publishing a paper as there was once in shooting a partridge? Can a Minister patronise one who breaks the same Law for which he casts another man into prison? What a vast field is opened to our gaze the moment we approach the Stamp duty on Papers! We might harangue for hours and not say a tithe of what ought to be said. In Mr. Bulwer’s speech* on his Motion for the removal of the Taxes on Knowledge, he dwelt on the contraband circulation of pernicious doctrines that were left unanswered because the law forbade an answer.† “But what,” cries one of the Papers, “are per-

* [Delivered in the House of Commons, on Thursday, the 14th June, 1832, when Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer, M.P. for Lincoln, moved for a Select Committee to consider the propriety of establishing a Cheap Postage on Newspapers and other Publications. This Speech will be found given as the Third in the recently published collection in two volumes of the Speeches of Edward Lord Lytton. See Vol. I. pp. 17—33.]

† Will it be believed that some of the newspapers—dreading, perhaps, the competition they ought not to dread, for they could not be so ignorant of the

nicious doctrines?" The Whigs call the Tory doctrines pernicious—the Tories retort on the Whigs—both unite against the Levellers—the attackers of Property and the advocates of assassination; and the last party perhaps think themselves sincerely in the right.* Which are the pernicious doctrines?—the answer is very short—Any doctrine not fully canvassed, and constantly discussed, is *sure* to become pernicious at last! We are quite sure that the doctrines of the cheap contraband papers must be wrong, because the Law obliges them to be all one way—because they must be violent, and may not be discussed—because the Law cannot put down the violence, and forbids the counterpoise. When Religion itself was the property of the Monks—when difference of sectarian opinion was not allowed—Religion preached up crusades and inquisitions—zeal was murder, and virtue was donations to the Church. It is the same with Reason as it was with Religion—to be safely exercised it must be generally exercised—to the errors of one sect oppose the opinions of the other sect. Truth perishes wherever there is Monopoly. At present the contraband press is the Monopoly of violent opinion. Open that Monopoly! Nature and Truth are alike in this—their great results are worked out from the opposite elements. A Monopoly of alkali in the physical system would be the same as a Monopoly of one set of opinions in the moral. The "Times" says justly that it would have nothing to fear from the repeal of the Stamp Duty.† Nor did the

present law—have positively asked—"Why, if the poison is circulated now at a penny, is not the antidote also circulated at the same price?" Why! because the law forbids it—because the contraband paper is written by those who defy the law—and those only.—There is *not one contraband political paper that is AN ANTIDOTE to the numberless envenomed ones!*—What a fact!—What a subject for delay—for indifference—for neglect!

* For all these doctrines *are* advocated very frankly in some of the contraband Papers.

† "*We should gain,*" adds the "Times"—"but we doubt if the public would—we should sell a great many more copies—but the public would be inundated with cheap, bad papers." Does not our acute Contemporary see that the two arguments destroy one another—if the sale of the good paper the "Times" will increase so greatly—does not the public as well as the "Times" benefit by that increase? If the "Times" can beat its rivals in public favour—the public is not contaminated by a rivalry so effectively counteracted. Take away the stamp, and the "Times" and "The Poor Man's Guardian" would assume a tolerable equality in point of price. How many would purchase the "Times" for its excellence, that now purchase "The Poor Man's Guardian" for its cheapness. We now force the Operative to buy bad papers—solely because they are the only papers he can afford to buy. We can adduce a curious instance of the truth. When Mr. Carpenter's

Motion for that repeal, nor the speech of the Mover, drive at such a consequence. The terrible power of one great Paper might be divided by the abolition of the Stamp Duty, but the sale would be necessarily increased. Many persons don't think so; but let them consider for a moment. Will not the multitude prefer always the best article?—does the best article suffer by becoming cheap?—does rivalry in shops prevent the best and most popular shop from making the greatest returns? Will it not be the same case with the Papers? Compare the “Constitutionnel” in its popular day with the “Times”—Compare!—the “Constitutionnel” is *not* to be compared with it in point of variety of talent and copiousness of intelligence; but the “Constitutionnel” sold for half the price, and consequently sold more than double the number. But the town will be inundated with cheap papers? Why not? the evil will soon cure itself. But then America—ay, just note how unfairly an argument may be wrenched aside. Mr. Bulwer cites America as an example of the fact that the number of Papers depends on the cheapness of Papers, whereon an opponent affects to suppose that he cites the instance as a proof of the excellence of the American papers, and he tells you that the American papers are abominable. Very likely; but the American papers are as good, on the whole, as the American books. Literature is far more advanced in this country than the United States:—there it is more general—here more lofty. We write better books than the Americans, and we write better papers—not on account of the price of the production, but the greater skill of the producer. Take away the Stamp of the paper—you don't take away the intellect from the Paper; yet some persons seem absolutely to think that the red mark confers a sort of Patent of Excellence. Is the unstamped Penny Magazine then so contemptible in its character? As regards the question of the Postage, there seems to be some mistake abroad in regard to Mr. Bulwer's precise

“Political Letter,” sold for fourpence—eight hundred copies were sold weekly at Manchester; when it became sevenpence, only fifty were sold at Manchester. Did those who gave up the “Political Letter” purchase the Legitimate Journals? No! on inquiry it was ascertained that they either went without any paper—or they substituted for the “Political Letter”—“The Poor Man's Guardian”—a Journal immeasurably more violent and inflammatory than the one they had deserted! Who, seeing this, can doubt, that to tax knowledge is to administer philtres to crime?

Motion on the subject. He did not move that a Postage should be adopted, but that its expediency should be inquired into. It is a very intricate question, requiring the most minute attention to details. But this fact is at least in its favour—it has never failed wherever it has been adopted, and so little in France did it operate against the circulation of the Metropolitan Papers, that, as Mr. Bulwer stated, the number of Papers sent from Paris in 1829 doubled the number sent from Paris in 1825; while during those years in England there had been little or no variation in the number sent from London into the Provinces. Yet mark—it was in that country where a postage was put on a cheap Paper that the number sent from the Metropolis had doubled, and it was in that country where the Newspaper is dear, but no postage imposed, that the number had not varied!—a striking fact. But the question certainly demands deep inquiry. If, on examination, it appears that a postage *would* operate against the London, or, indeed, the country papers, there must be *no* Postage *upon* Papers—the Revenue must look elsewhere for compensation. But Books, Pamphlets, Circulars, all Literary Publications—they at least might *unquestionably* be allowed to circulate cheaply by post—a tax that would be most advantageous to the Public, and sure to produce the same sum, at the lowest computation, as the odious advertisement duty!

What's this?—"The London Penny Journal"—very good—tales, sketches—as light as the Penny Magazine is wise. A penn'orth of sack to a penn'orth of bread. "The New Entertaining Press"—a respectable, tall, graceful, well-shaped young Gentleman, full of accomplishment and research.—Poetry, Criticism, Fiction, Morality, nothing comes amiss to him—you may breakfast with him most agreeably, and his fee for Attendance is only a Penny—heartily do I thank him for his reasonable charges, and his excellent qualities. But here is a threepenny Leviathan, sixteen pages of close print, and capital matter! Stories by the dozen—puns, jokes, reviews, and all manner of delicacies, for the dimidium of sixpence. Blessed be the name of "The Original!" It is really a most spirited, entertaining, and intelligent periodical. What a capital extravaganza! A Fishing Schoolmaster, angling and catching one of his own drowned disciples.

"Ye dreams of sport—too speedy in your flight,
 Enough to make a *gentleman* grow *wild*;
 How hard his lot, who hungering for a bite,
 Must earn his meat *by bringing up a child*!"

"The British Drama and Literary Humourist"—full of plays and farces—a place where the damned are recovered, and where the author takes his revenge on the manager that refused him, by proving the manager an ass—a very good idea, and very amusingly bodied forth. More—more—more Halfpenny Magazines, Farthing Gazettes. Our old friend or foe, "The Literary Omnibus,"* with a lampoon on ourself, which is now become a joke old enough in its mouth to be a little tiresome. And the pretty little pedant, with the household name of "The Tatler," coming over us with a Mr. Bickerstaff air, and a ghost-like odour from the memory of White's Chocolate House! A wide field and fair play for ye all, gentlemen—may ye live and flourish, and afford an encouragement to this expensive world to be reasonable in its expenses as well as its views! It is a pleasant thing to see your honest faces smiling upon us with a friendly air of good-natured wisdom; and if I were not in Cypriolis, thinking of Jesthah and Queen Anne's Court, I would spend an hour in Fleet Street to watch the schoolboy and the mechanic buy his pennyworth of pleasant relaxation. What more touching thought, than that even by these fresh seeds springing up on the roadsides, we may judge of that future—that general—that all-supplying harvest of intellectual food which may reward hereafter our present labours. Free Trade in Thought, and no Corn Laws for the Mind!

The day seldom passes in Cypriolis without a visit from Kosem Kesamim. Sometimes, when I least expect it, I lift my eyes and behold his dim, undefined, and awful shape in the far recesses of my subterraneous chamber. Then, perhaps, he will converse for hours on high and mystic themes, in which only by fit and interval I can follow his shadowy words—or, as often without uttering a sound, he will gradually recede, and pass like a vapour from my eyes. The Witches all speak of him with wonder, and yet reserve; they concur in terming him a human and living shape, though gifted with superhuman powers, and having shunned the conditions of Life (Death) through a hundred ages—

* [A shortlived precursor of Cruikshank's ditto.]

a man like ourselves in aught, save the powers of his sorcery. As to the Witches, it seems, that in every age, and within every country, this dread and singular magician has had the power to select one person, of either sex, whom, if the selected so wills it, he may transplant yet living—though for ever dead to the common usages and tribes of Earth—to this preternatural life and these unseen abodes. Thus he gathers round him slowly, and from century to century, a grotesque and motley court—evidences of the duration of his own desolate and wondrous life. These, his subjects, are commonly dispersed in various depths and hollows of Earth; and only once a year they meet in one solemn and stately interview. This is the grand event of the Witch life, though it is varied with many minor gala days, and is, altogether, passed pleasantly enough, considering that the ladies and gentlemen live as separately as Mrs. Trollope's Americans. I stay here partly for the purpose of attending this great ceremonial—glad, too, of an excuse for learning more of mysteries, which gradually vanish into simple facts beneath the daily light of custom. Mystery!—sounding word!—apology for our own ignorance! No one thing is in itself more mystic than another; it is our imperfect sight that makes the monster and shapes forth the spectre. What is there more mysterious in the dark existence of this magician—in the life of his court—in these still wastes of forgotten marble by which I am surrounded, than in the swarming life that peoples the drop of water—than the growth of the tree before our window—than the everlasting course of the seasons under which we glide insensibly from life to death? Magic incredible!—Pooh! Custom!—what magic in that one word!

I am not without hopes of learning, from the lips of Kosem Kesamim, the secret of his own life. At times I venture to approach that subject, and he does not avoid it; nay, I believe that he will be disposed to—Ha!

* * * * *

While I wrote these last words, I chanced to turn—I beheld HIM beside me! “And wouldst thou learn?” said the Magician, in that mournful voice which seems to breathe of the vanity of all knowledge, “wouldst thou, in truth, learn the secret of his life who has conquered the ordinary laws which circumscribe his race? Somewhat of

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his gloomy history thou mightest indeed glean from his lips, but how much to thy soul would be lost, and utterly uncompassed! Yet thou shalt have a portion of thy wish. At midnight we shall meet again!"

With these words, the Sorcerer's figure faded gradually away. I am alone—his words still ring in my ear—with what anxiety I shall watch for midnight!

No. VI.

A Scene.—The Men of Old.—The Tale of Kosem Kesamim.

It was deep night, and the Magician suddenly stood before me. "Arise," said he, "and let us go forth upon the surface of the World." I rose, and followed the Sorcerer through the dead vastness of the buried city, until we came to the entrance of a cavern. Pursuing its subterraneous course for some minutes,—not with a natural swiftness of step, but with the gliding and rapid motion with which the Sorcerer passed; not touching the earth, but just above its soil, so that it was the air (which he could agitate and strengthen at will) which charioted us along;—pursuing, I say, the course of this cavern for some minutes, with the rushing sound of prisoned waters loud and wild upon the ear, we came at length to a spot where the atmosphere struck upon my breath with a chill and earthy freshness; and presently, through a fissure in the rock, the sudden whiteness of the moon broke in, and lit up, partially, walls radiant with spars, and washed by a deep stream, that wound its mysterious way to the upper air. And now, gliding through the chasm, we stood in a broad cell, with its lofty arch open to the sea. Column and spire (brilliant with various crystallizations—spars of all hues) sprang lightly up on either side of this cavern—and with a leap, and a mighty voice, the stream, whose course we had been tracking, rushed into the arms of the great Sea. Along that sea star after star mirrored its solemn lustre—and the Moon, clad in a fuller splendour than I had ever seen gathered round her melancholy orb, filled the cavern with a light, that was to the light of day what the life of an Angel is to that of a Mortal. Passionless, yet tender—

steadfast—mystic—unwavering—it shone upon the glittering spars, and made a holiness of the very air; and in a long line, from the cavern to the verge of Heaven, her sweet face breathed a measured and quiet joy into the rippling billows—"smiles of the sea."* A few thin and fleecy clouds alone varied the clear expanse of the heavens—and they rested, like the cars of spirits, far on the horizon.

"And beautiful," said I, "is this outward earth—your dim realms beneath have nothing to compare with it. There are no stars in the temples of the hidden earth—and one glimpse from the lovely Moon is worth all the witchfires and meteors of the Giant palaces below."

"Thou lookest, young Mortal," said the Wizard in his mournful voice, "over my native portion of the World. Beside that sea stood my ancestral halls—and beneath that Moon first swelled within my bosom the deep tides of human emotion—and in this cavern, whence we now look forth on the seas and heavens, my youth passed some of its earnest hours in contemplation of that high and starred order which your lessened race—clogged with the mire of ages—never know; for that epoch was far remote in those ages which even Tradition scarcely pierces. Your first fathers—What of their knowledge know ye?—what of their secrets have ye retained? Their vast and dark minds were never fathomed by the plummet of your researches. The waves of the black night have swept over the Antique World—and all that you can guess of its buried glories are from the shivered fragments that ever and anon Chance casts upon the shores of the Modern Race."

"Do we sink then," said I, "by comparison with the men of those distant times? Is not our lore deeper and more certain?—Was not their knowledge the offspring of a confused and labouring conjecture?—Did they not live among dreams and shadows, and make Truth itself the creature of a fertile imagination?"

"Nay," replied the shrouded and uncertain form beside me—"their knowledge pierced deeper into the Heart of Things. They consulted the stars—but it was to measure the dooms of Earth;—and could we raise from the dust their perished scrolls, you would behold the mirror of the living times. Their prophecies—(wrung from the toil and

* *Æschylus' Prometheus.*

rapture of those powers which ye suffer to sleep, quenched, within the soul)—traversed the wilds of ages, and pointed out among savage hordes the Cities and Laws of Empires yet to be. Ten thousand Arts have mouldered from the Earth—and Science is the shadow of what it was.—Young Mortal, thou hast set thine heart upon Wisdom—thou hast wasted the fresh and radiant hours of opening life amidst the wearying thoughts of others;—thou hast laboured after Knowledge, and in that labour the healthful hues have for ever left thy cheek, and age creeps upon the core while the dew is yet upon the leaf;—and for this labour—and in the transport and the vision that the soul's labour nurtures—your spirit is now rapt from its fleshly career on earth,—wandering at will amongst the dread chasms and mines wombed within the world,—breathing a vital air amongst the dead,—comraded by Spirits, and the Powers that are not of flesh,—and catching, by imperfect glimpse and shadowy type, some knowledge of the arch mysteries of Creation;—and thou beholdest in me and in my science that which thy learning and thy fancy tracked not before. No legend ever chanced upon my strange and solemn being: nothing in my nature resembles to the tales of Wizard or Sorcerer that the vulgar phantasies of Superstition have embodied. Thou hast seen what none have drawn—and Fable has hacknied not the Truth. Thou wouldst learn something of the Being thus permitted to thy marvel;—be it so. Under these sparkling arches—and before my ancestral sea—and beneath the listening ear of the halting Moon—thou shalt learn a history of the Antique World.

THE TALE OF KOSEM KESAMIM.

Along the shores which for thirty centuries no human foot has trod—and upon plains where now not one stone stands upon another, telling even of decay—was once the city and the empire of The Wise Kings—or so termed by their neighbours were the monarchs that ruled this country. Generation after generation they had toiled to earn and preserve that name. Amidst the gloom of mysterious temples, and the oracular learning of the star-read priests, the youth of each succeeding King was reared into a grave and brooding manhood.—Their whole lives were

mystery.—Wrapt in the sepulchral grandeur of the Imperial Palace—seen rarely—like Gods—they sent forth, as from a cloud, the light of their dread but benign laws:—the courses of their life were tracked not—but they were believed to possess the power over the seasons and elements—and to summon, at their will, the large-winged spirits, that walk to and fro across the earth, governing, like dreams, with a vague and unpenetrated power, the destinies of Nations, and the ambition of Kings.

There was born to this imperial race a son, to whom seer and king alike foretold a strange and preternatural destiny. His childhood itself was of a silent, stern, and contemplative nature. And his learning, even in his boyish youth, had ransacked all that the grey priests could teach him.

But the passions are interwoven deeply with the elements of thought. What man earns real wisdom but by the process of fierce emotion?—And amidst all the pursuits of his aspiring mind, the heart of the young prince burned with a thousand passions untold and unregulated. The Magician paused for a moment, and then, in a voice far different from the cold and solemn tone in which his accents were usually clothed, he broke forth:—

Oh, beautiful, beyond the beauty of these sicklied and hoary times, was the beauty of Woman in the young world!—The glory of Eden was not yet departed from her face, and the lustre of unwearied Nature glowed alike upon Earth and Earth's majestic daughters. Beauty is youth's Idol—and in the breast of Gondorah, for so was the Prince popularly called, (his higher and mystic titles may not be revealed,) the great passion—the great yearning—the great desire—was for the lovely and the august—whatever their shapes or mould. Not in woman only, but in all things, the Beautiful made his worship—wherever he beheld it, the image of the Deity was glassed to his adoring soul. But to him—or rather to myself—for I—(if memory retains identity through the shift and lapse of worlds; making *me*, the same as one who, utterly dissimilar, lived a man amongst men, long ages back)—to me, there was yet a fiercer and more absorbing passion—than love, or the idolatry of Nature—THE DESIRE TO KNOW!—My mind launched itself into the depth of Things—I loved step after step to trace Effect to its first Cause. Reason was a

chain from heaven to earth, and every link led me to aspire to the stars themselves. And the wisdom of my wise fathers was mine; I knew the secret of the elements, and could charm them into slumber, or arouse them to war. The mysteries of that dread Chemistry which is now among the Sciences that sleep—by which we can command the air and walk on its viewless paths—by which we can wake the thunder—and summon the cloud—and rive the earth—the exercise of that high faculty—the Imagining Power—by which Fancy itself *creates* what it *wills*, and which, trained and exercised, can wake the spectres of the dead—and bring visible to the carnal eye the Genii that walk the world—the watchful, straining, sleepless science, that can make a Sage's volume of the stars—these were mine, and yet I murmured—I repined!—what mysteries were yet to know! The acquisition of to-day was but the disappointment of the morrow, and the dispensation of my ambition—was—to *desire*.

It was the evening, and I went from the groves of the sacred temple, to visit one whom I loved. The way spread over black and rugged masses of rock, amidst which, the wild shrub and dark weed sprung ripe and verdant; for the waste as yet was eloquent of some great revulsion of the soil in the earlier epochs of the World—when Change often trod the heels of Change, and the earth was scarcely reconciled to the sameness of her calm career. And I stood beneath the tree where SHE was to meet me—and my heart leapt within me as I saw her footsteps bounding along—and she came with her sweet lips breathing the welcome of human love, and I laid my head on her bosom and was content.

And, “Oh,” said she, “art thou not proud of thy dawn-fame? The Seers speak of thee with wonder, and the Priests bow their heads before thy name.”

Then the passion of my soul broke forth, and I answered, —“What is this petty power that I possess, and what this barren knowledge? The Great Arch Secret of all, I have toiled night after night to conquer and I cannot attain it. What is it to command even the dark spirits at war with Heaven—if we know not the nature of what we command? What I desire is not knowledge, but *the source* of knowledge. I wish that my eye should penetrate at once into the germ and cause of things; and that when I look upon the outward beauty of the world, my sight may pierce

within, and see the mechanism that causes and generates the beauty working beneath. Enough of my art have I learned to know that there is a film over human eyes which prevents their penetrating beyond the surface; it is to remove that film, and dart into the essence, and the One Great Productive Spirit of all Things, that I labour and yearn in vain. All other knowledge is a cheat: this is the high prerogative which mocks at conjecture and equals us with a God!"

Then Lyciah saw that I was moved, and she kissed me, and sung me the sweet songs, that steeped my heart, as it were, in a bath of fragrant herbs.

Midnight had crept over the earth as I returned homeward across that savage scene. Rock heaped on rock bordered and broke upon the lonely valley that I crossed—and the moon was still, and shining, as at this hour, when its life is four thousand years nearer to its doom. Then suddenly I saw moving before me, with a tremulous motion, a meteoric fire of an exceeding brightness. Ever as it moved above the seared and sterile soil, it soared and darted restlessly to and fro;—and I thought, as it danced and quivered, that I heard it laugh from its burning centre with a wild and frantic joy. I fancied, as I gazed upon the fire, that in that shape revelled one of the children of the Elementary Genii; and, addressing it in their language, I bade it assume a palpable form. But the Fire darted on unheedingly, save that now the laugh from amidst the flame came all distinct and fearfully on my ear. Then my hair stood erect—and my veins curdled—and my knees knocked together;—I was under the influence of an Awe; for I felt that the Power was not of the world—nor of that which my ancestral knowledge of the power of other worlds had yet pierced. My voice faltered, and thrice I strove to speak to the Light—but in vain; and when at length I addressed it in the solemn adjuration by which the sternest of the Fiends are bound, the Fire sprang up from the soil—towering aloof and aloft—with a livid but glorious lustre, bathing the whole atmosphere in its glare,—quenching, with an intenser ray, the splendours of the Moon,—and losing its giant crest in the Far Invisible of Heaven!

And a voice came forth, saying—"Thou callest upon inferior Spirits; I am that which thou hast pined to behold—I am 'The Living Principle of the World!'"

I bowed my face, and covered it with my hands, and my voice left me; and when again I looked up, behold, the Fire had shrunk from its momentary height, and was (now dwarfed and humble) creeping before me in its wavering and snake-like course. But fear was on me, and I fled, and fast fled the Fire by my side; and oft, but faint, from its ghastly heart came the laugh that thrilled the marrow of my bones. And the waste was past, and the Giant Temple of the One God rose before me; I rushed forward, and fell breathless by its silent Altar. And there sat the High Priest, for night and day some one of the Sacred Host sat by the Altar; and he was of a great age, and all human emotion had left his veins; but even he was struck with my fear, and gazed upon me with his rayless eyes, and bade me be of cheer, for the place was holy. I looked round and the Fire was not visible, and I breathed freely; but I answered not the Priest, for years had dulled him into stone, and when I rose his eye followed me not. I gained the purple halls set apart for the King's son. And the pillars were of ivory inlaid with gold—and the gems and perfumes of the world gave light and fragrance to those wondrous courts; and the gorgeous banquet was spread, and music from unseen hands swelled along arch and aisle as I trod the royal Hall. But lo! by my throne, crouching beneath the purpureal canopy, I saw the laughing Fire—and it seemed, lowly and paled, to implore protection. And I paused, and took the courtiers aside, and I asked them to mark the flame; but they saw it not—it burnt to mine eye alone. Then knew I that it was indeed a Spirit of that high race, which, even when they take visible form, are not visible save to the students of the Dread Science! And I trembled but revered.

And the Fire stayed by me night and day, and I grew accustomed to its light. But never, by charm or spell, could I draw further word from it; and it followed my steps with a silent and patient homage. And by degrees a vain and proud delight came over me to think that I was so honoured; and I looked upon the pale and changeful face of the Fire as the face of a friend.

There was a man who had told years beyond the memory of the living—a renowned and famous seer—to whom, in times of dread and omen, our Priests and Monarchs themselves repaired for warning and advice. I sought his abode.

The Seer was not of our race—he came from the distant waters of the Nile, and the dark mysteries of the City of Egypt had girded his youth. It was in this cavern in which, young stranger of the North, this tale is now poured into thine ear, that the Seer held his glittering home—for lamp upon lamp then lighted up, from an unfailing naphtha, these dazzling spars—and the seamen of the vessels that crowded yonder bay beheld, far down the blue waters, when on their various cruise, the nightly blaze flickering along the wave, and reminding the reverent mariner of many an awful legend of the Cavern Home. And hither had often turned my young feet in my first boyhood, and from the shrivelled lip of the old Egyptian had much of my loftiest learning been gleaned; for he loved me—and seeing with a prophet eye far down the great depths of Time, he knew that I was fated to wild and fearful destinies, and a life surpassing the period of his own.

It was on that night, when the New Moon scatters its rank and noxious influence over the foliage and life of earth, that I sought the Egyptian. And the Fire burned with a fiercer and redder light than its wont, as it played and darted by my side. And when, winding by the silver sands, I passed into the entrance of the Cave, I saw the old man sitting on a stone. And when I entered, the Seer started from his seat in fear and terror—his eyes rolled—his thin grey hairs stood erect—a cold sweat broke from his brow—and the dread master stood before his pupil in agony and awe.

“Thou comest,” muttered he with white lips; “What is by thy side? hast thou dared to seek knowledge with the Soul of all Horror—with the ghastly Leper of—— Avaunt! bid the fiend begone!”

His voice seemed to leave the old man, and with a shriek he fell upon his face on the ground.

“Is it,” said I, appalled by his terror—“is it the Fire that haunts my steps at which thou tremblest? behold, it is harmless as a dog; it burns not while it shines; if a fiend, it is a merry fiend, for I hear it laugh while I speak. But it is for this, Dread Sire, that I have sought thee. Canst thou tell me the nature of the Spirit—for a Spirit it surely is? Canst thou tell me its end and aim?”

I lifted the old man from the earth—and his kingly heart returned to him—and he took the Wizard Crown

from the wall, and he placed it on his brows—for he was as a Monarch among the Things that are not of clay. And he said to the Fire—"Approach!" And the Fire glided to his knees. And he said, "Art thou the Spirit of the Element, and is thy home in the Flint's heart?"

And a voice from the flame answered "No."

And again the Egyptian trembled.

"What art thou, then?" said he.

And the Fire answered, "Thy Lord."

And the limbs of the Egyptian shook as with the grasp of Death.

And he said, "Art thou a Demon of *this* world?"

And the Fire answered, "I am the Life of this world—and I am *not* of other worlds."

"I know thee—I fear thee—I acknowledge thee!" said the Wizard; "and in thy soft lap shall this crowned head soon be laid."

And the Fire laughed.

"But tell me," said I,—for though my blood stood still my soul was brave and stern—"Tell me, O Sire, what hath this Thing with me?"

"It is the Great Ancestor of us all!" said the Egyptian, groaning.

"And knows it the Secrets of the Past?"

"The Secrets of the Past are locked within it."

"Can it teach me that which I pine to know?—Can it teach me the essence of things—the nature of all I see?—Can it raise the film from my human eyes?"

"Rash Prince, be hushed!" cried the Egyptian, rising, and glaring upon me with his stony eye—"Seek not to know that which will curse thee with the knowledge. Ask not a power that would turn life into a living grave. All the lore that man ever knew is mine; but *that* secret have I shunned, and *that* power have I cast from me, as the shepherd casts the viper from his hand. Be still—be moderate—be wise. And bid me exorcise the Spirit that accosts thee from the Fire!"

"Can it teach me the arch mystery? When I gaze upon the herb or flower, can it gift my gaze with the power to pierce into the cause and workings of its life?"

"I can teach thee this," said the Fire; and it rose higher, and burned fiercer, as it spake, till the lamps of naphtha paled before it.

"Then abide by me, O Spirit," said I; "and let us not be severed."

"Miserable boy," cried the Egyptian; "was this, then, the strange and preternatural doom which my Art foresaw was to be thine, though it deciphered not its nature? Knowest thou that this Fire so clear—so pure—so beautiful—is——"

"Beware!" cried the voice from the Fire; and the crest of the flame rose, as the crest of a serpent about to spring upon its prey.

"Thou awest me not," said the Egyptian, though the blood fled from his shrivelled and tawny cheeks. "Thou art——"

"The Living Principle of the World," interrupted the voice.

"And thine other name?" cried the Egyptian.

"Thy Conqueror!" answered the voice; and straight, as the answer went forth, the Egyptian fell, blasted as by lightning, a corpse at my feet. The light of the Fire played with a blue and tremulous lustre upon the carcase, and presently I beheld by that light that the corpse was already passed into the loathsomeness of decay—the flesh was rotting from the bones—and the worm and the creeping thing, that the rottenness generates, twined in the very jaws and temples of the Sage.

I sickened and gasped for breath—"Is this thy work, oh Fearful Fiend!" said I, shuddering. And the Fire, passing from the corpse, crept humbly to my feet—and its voice answered—"Whatever my power, it is thy slave!"

"Was that death thy work?" repeated my quivering lips.

"Thou knowest," answered the Fire, "that Death is not the will of any Power—save one. The Death came from His will—and I but exulted over the blow!"

I left the cavern; my art, subtle as it was, gave me no glimpse into the causes of the Egyptian's death. I looked upon the Fire, as it crept along the herbage, with an inquisitive, yet dreading eye. I felt an awe of the Demon's power; and yet the proud transport I had known in the subjection of that power was increased, and I walked with a lofty step at the thought that I should have so magnificent a slave. But the words of the mysterious Egyptian still rang in my ear—still I shuddered and recoiled before

his denunciation of the power and the secret I desired. And the voice of the Fire now addressed me (as I passed along the starry solitude) with a persuasive and sweet tone. "Shrink not, young Sage," it said, or rather sang, "from a power beyond that of which thy wisest ancestors ever dreamed—lose not thy valour at the drivelling whispers of age—when did ever age approve what youth desires? Thou art formed for the destiny which belongs to royal hearts—the destiny courts thee. Why dost thou play the laggard?"

"Knowledge," said I, musingly, "can never be productive of woe. If it be knowledge thou canst give me, I will not shrink."

The Fire played cheerily to and fro. And from the midst of it there stepped forth a pale and shadowy form, of female shape and of exceeding beauty; her face was indeed of no living wanness, and the limbs were indistinct, and no roundness in their vapoury robes; but the features were lovely as a dream, and long yellow hair—glowing as sunlight—fell adown her neck. "Thou wouldst pierce," said she, "to the Principle of the World. Thou wouldst that thine eye should penetrate into my fair and most mystic dominion. But not yet; there is an ordeal to pass. To the Whole Knowledge thou must glide through the Imperfect!" Then the female kissed my eyes, and vanished and with it vanished also the Fire.

Oh, beautiful!—Oh, wondrous!—Oh, divine! A scale had fallen from my sight—and a marvellous glory was called forth upon the face of earth. I saw millions and millions of spirits shooting to and fro athwart the air—spirits that my magic had yet never descried—spirits of rainbow hues, and quivering with the joy that made their nature. Wherever I cast my eye, life upon life was visible. Every blade of grass swarmed with worlds invisible to the naked eye—but performing with mimic regularity all the courses of the human race; every grain of dust, every drop of water, was an universe—mapped into a thousand tribes, all fulfilling the great destinies of Mortality—Love—Fear—Hope—Emulation—Avarice—Jealousy—War—Death. My eyes had been touched with a glorious charm. And even in that, which to the casual eye would have been a mute, and solitary, and breathless hour, I was suddenly summoned into a dazzling atmosphere of life—every atom

a world. And, bending my eyes below, I saw emerging from the tiny hollows of the earth, those fantastic and elfin shapes that have been chiefly consecrated by your Northern Bards; forth they came merrily, merrily—dancing in the smooth sheen of the silent heavens, and chasing the swift-winged creatures, that scarcely the glass of science can give to the eye. If all around was life, it was the life of enchantment and harmony—a subtle, pervading element of delight. Speech left me for very joy, and I gazed, thrilled and breathless, around me—entered, as it were, into the Inner Temples of the Great System of the Universe.

I looked round for the Fire—it was gone. I was alone amidst this new and populous creation, and I stretched myself voluptuously beneath a tree, to sate myself with wonder. As a Poet in the height of his delirium was my rapture—for my veins were filled with Poesy, which is Intoxication—and my eyes had been touched with Poesy, which is the Creative Power—and the miracles before me were Poesy, which is the Enchanter's Wand.

Days passed, and the bright Demon which had so gifted me appeared not, nor yet did the spell cease; but every hour, ever moment, new marvels rose. I could not walk—I could not touch stone or herb, without coming into a new realm utterly different from those I had yet seen, but equally filled with life—so that there was never a want of novelty; and had I been doomed to pass my whole existence upon three feet of earth, I might have spent that existence in perpetual variety—in unsatisfied and eternally new research. But most of all, when I sought Lyciah I felt the full gift I possessed; for in conversing with her my sense penetrated to her heart, and I felt, as with a magnetic sympathy, moving through its transparent purity, the thoughts and emotions that were all my own.

By degrees I longed indeed to make her a sharer in my discovered realms: for I now slowly began to feel the weariness of a conqueror who reigns alone—none to share my power or partake the magnificence in which I dwelt.

One day, even in the midst of angelic things that floated blissfully round me—so that I heard the low melodies they hymned as they wheeled aloft—one day this pining, this sense of solitude in life—of satiety in glory—came on me. And I said, "But this is the imperfect state; why not enjoy the whole? Could I ascend to that high and empyreal

Knowledge, to which this is but a step, doubtless this dissatisfied sentiment would vanish; discontent arises because there is something still to attain; attain all, and discontent must cease. Bright Spirit," cried I aloud, "to whom I already owe so great a benefit, come to me now—why hast thou left me? Come and complete thy gifts. I see yet only the wonders of the secret portions of the world—touch mine eyes that I may see *the cause* of the wonders. I am surrounded with an air of life; let me pierce into the principle of that life. Bright Spirit, minister to thy servant!" Then I heard the sweet voice that had spoken in the Fire—but I saw not the Fire itself. And the voice said unto me—

"Son of the Wise Kings, I am here!"

"I see thee not," said I. "Why hidest thou thy lustre?"

"Thou seest the Half, and that very sight blinds thee to the Whole. This redundance and flow of life gushes from me as from its source. When the mid-course of the River is seen, who sees also its distant spring? In thee, not myself, is the cause that thou beholdest me not. I am as I was when I bowed my crest to thy feet; but thine eyes are not what then they were!"

"Thou tellest me strange things, O Demon!" said I; "for why, when admitted to a clearer sight of things, should my eyes be darkened alone when they turn to thee?"

"Does not all knowledge, save the one right knowledge, only lead men from the discovery of the Primal Causes. As Imagination may soar aloft, and find new worlds, yet lose the solid truth—so thou mayest rise into the regions of a preternatural lore, yet recede darklier and darklier from the clue to Nature herself."

I mused over the words of the spirit, but their sense seemed dim.

"Canst thou not appear to me in thine old, wan, and undulating brightness?" said I, after a pause.

"Not until thine eyes receive power to behold me."

"And when may I be worthy that power?"

"When thou art thoroughly dissatisfied with thy present gifts."

"Dread Demon, I am so now!"

"Wilt thou pass from this pleasant state at a hazard,—not knowing that which may ensue. Behold, all around thee is full of glory, and musical with joy! Wilt thou abandon that state for a dark and perilous Unknown?"

"The Unknown is the passion of him who aspires to know."

"Pause; for it is a dread alternative," said the Invisible.

"My heart beats steadily.—Come,—mine be the penalty of the desire!"

"Thy wish is granted," said the Spirit.

Then straightway a pang, quick, sharp, agonizing, shot through my heart. I felt the stream in my veins stand still, hardening into a congealed substance—my throat rattled, I struggled against the grasp of some iron power.—A terrible sense of my own impotence seized me—my muscles refused—my will my voice fled—I was in the possession of some authority that had entered, and claimed, and usurped the citadel of mine own self. Then came a creeping of the flesh, a deadly sensation of ice and utter coldness; and lastly, a blackness, deep and solid as a mass of rock, fell over the whole Earth—I had entered DEATH!

From this state I was roused by the voice of the Demon. "Awake, look forth!—Thou hast thy desire!—abide the penalty!" The darkness broke from the earth; the ice thawed from my veins; once more my senses were my servants.

I looked, and behold I stood in the same spot, but how changed! The earth was one blue and crawling mass of putridity; its rich verdure, its lofty trees, its sublime mountains, its glancing waters, had all been the deceit of my previous blindness; the very green of the grass and the trees was rottenness, and the leaves (not each leaf one and inanimate as they seemed to the common eye) were composed of myriads of insects and puny reptiles, battered on the corruption from which they sprang. The waters swarmed with a leprous life—those beautiful shapes that I had seen in my late delusion were corrupt in their several parts, and from that corruption other creatures were generated living upon them. Every breath of air was not air, a thin and healthful fluid, but a wave of animalculæ, poisonous and foetid; (for the Air is the Arch Corruptor, hence all who breathe die; it is the slow, sure venom of Nature, pervading and rotting all things;) the light of the Heavens was the sickly, loathsome glare that steamed from the universal Death in Life. The tiniest thing that moved—you beheld the decay moving through its veins, and that its corruption, unconscious to itself, engendered new tribes of life! The World was one dead carcase, from which every thing the World bore took its being. There was

not such a thing as beauty!—there was not such a thing as life that did not generate from its own corruption a loathsome life for others! I looked down upon myself, and saw that my very veins swarmed with a mote-like creation of shapes, springing into hideous existence from mine own disease, and Mocking the Human Destiny with the same career of love, life, and death. Methought it must be a spell, that change of scene would change. I shut my eyes with a frantic horror, and I fled, fast, fast, but blinded; and ever as I fled a low laugh rang in my ears, and I stopped not till I was at the feet of Lyciah, for she was my first involuntary thought. Whenever a care or fear possessed me, I had been wont to fly to her bosom, and charm my heart by the magic of her sweet voice. I was at the feet of Lyciah—I clasped her knees—I looked up imploringly into her face—God of my Fathers! the same curse attended me still! Her beauty was gone. There was no whole,—no one life in that Being whom I had so adored. Her life was composed of a million lives. Her stately shape, of atoms crumbling from each other, and so bringing about the ghastly state of corruption which reigned in all else around.—Her delicate hues, her raven hair, her fragrant lips—Pah!—What, what was my agony!—I turned from her again,—I shrank in loathing from her embrace,—I fled once more,—on—on. I ascended a mountain, and looked down on the various leprosies of Earth. Sternly I forced myself to the task; sternly I inhaled the knowledge I had sought; sternly I drank in the horrible penalty I had dared.

“Demon,” I cried, “appear, and receive my curse!”

“Lo, I am by thy side evermore,” said the voice. Then I gazed, and saw the Fire was by my side; and I saw that it was the livid light that the jaws of Rottenness emits; and in the midst of the light, which was as its shroud and garment, stood a Giant Shape—that was the shape of a Corpse that had been for months buried. I gazed upon the Demon with an appalled yet unquailing eye, and, as I gazed, I recognized in those ghastly lineaments a resemblance to the Female Spirit that had granted me the first fatal gift. But exaggerated, enlarged, dead,—Beauty rotted into horror.

“I am that which thou didst ask to see face to face.—I am the Principle of Life.”

"Of Life! Out, horrible mocker!—hast thou no other name?"

"I have! and the other name is—CORRUPTION!"

"Bright Lamps of Heaven," I cried, lifting my eyes in anguish from the loathly Charnel of the Universal Earth; "and is this, which men call 'Nature,' is this the sole Principle of the World?"

As I spoke, the huge carcase beneath my feet trembled.—And over the face of the Corpse beside me there fell a fear.—And lo! the Heavens were lit up with a pure and glorious light, and from the midst of them there came forth A Voice, which rolled slowly over the whole face of the charnel earth as the voice of thunder above the valley of the shepherd. "SUCH," said the Voice, "IS NATURE, IF THOU ACCEPTEST NATURE AS THE FIRST CAUSE—SUCH IS THE UNIVERSE WITHOUT A GOD!"

NO. VII.

The Cavern Scene with Kosem Kesamim continued.—The gigantic Apparition.—Its Dialogue with Kosem Kesamim.—The alternative offered me.—My decision.—The invocation to Sleep.—The change of Scene.—London once more.—Comparison between the Gaiety of London and that of Paris.—The former vindicated.—News.—Elections.—Theatres.—Mr. Monck Mason and his Opera.—Applauded Mediocrity a sign of the Degradation of the Art in which it is displayed.—Excellence and Abuse of it inseparable.—A walk in the Streets.—Oratorical Panegyric on London.—The Virtues of Oxford Street.—Vagrants, Wolves, and Vagabonds compared.—Idleness, its good effects in the Established Church.—Ministers and the Penny Magazine.—Characters Sketched.—The man who has benefited by a Public School.—The Generous Actress.—The Faithful Lover, and the Wisdom of Faithful Love.—My Vindication of the Happiness of the Passion.—Asmodeus replies by the Anecdote of the French Marquis.—The Susceptibility to Ennui is the true Secret of an Active Mind.—Pleasures enumerated, &c.

THE peculiar nature of my adventures under the auspices of Asmodeus, is well adapted to the desultory manner in which their narrative appears, being like the recital, constantly broken off, and changing from grave to gay,—from mystery to plain-dealing,—from the upper earth to its interior caverns—with a rapidity which the long intervals in my narrative—gaps from month to month—tend to soften:—fatiguing, may I trust, the reader somewhat less than they do the hero.

B. B.

It will be remembered that I left off at that part of the Tale of Kosem Kesamim when a voice from Heaven had drawn the moral of Immortality from the terrors of Corruption.

While I was all eager and breathless to hear the remainder of this primeval and weird history, its thread was at this moment suddenly interrupted by a strange Apparition that appeared at the mouth of the Cave. It was a female form, or rather likeness of a form, of exceeding height. The face was beautiful—but severe and fearful—and set, as it were, in a profound and death-like calm. It wore a pale, yet luminous diadem on its head, from which the locks, which were dark, parted in a regular and majestic flow. The diadem seemed wrought of light itself, impalpable and tremulous; and as the face—still and motionless in a stony repose—looked upon us, it recalled to me the images of those gigantic Sphinxes whose likeness has outlived their worship; but yet the more did it recall to me some vague and inexpressible dreams, as of a countenance I had seen long years before, though not in my present state of existence,—a memory faint and confused, retained by the soul from the wrecks of a former being. And the figure of the female was not of flesh, but transparent and ethereal, so that the moon shone through its mist-like robes as through a shadow. And a voice broke from the lips of the female, though they stirred not the while, and thus it said—

“Mightiest of Earth’s Magicians! why revealest thou my secrets without mine expressed consent? Am I not the keeper of all mysteries?—is not my bosom the storehouse of all dark things? Why draggest thou to day the wrecks that have mouldered for ages in the dread Ocean, without homage done to me, unto whom they belong?”

“O Spirit of the Past,” answered Kosem Kesamim, “whom now I see embodied in this solitary and desert shore, where for forgotten centuries human footstep hath not trod—fit scene for thy echoless wanderings,—O Spirit of the Past! forgive me if I have erred. But thou—unearthly and passionless—knowest not the blessing felt by a human breast in confiding its memories to another.”

“That,” answered the Past, “is a poor and unworthy sentiment, meet for the herd who share together their low sorrows and empty joys—but not for the lone and comrade-

less Lord of Nature—not for the Master of Magicians. But for thee, young Mortal, knowest thou that these secrets are the wages of death? None—save he by thy side—he who hath conquered death—can learn them and live. Wherefore, beware how thou listenest, and drinkest in with thine ears the poison of existence.”

Then I looked eagerly on the Wizard, and methought he seemed confused by the words of the Spirit; and, after a moment's pause, he answered—

“The Past speaketh truth. Oh, Mortal; wilt thou be wise and die; or be as thy blinded brotherhood, and live?”

I can assure thee, O pleasant reader! that these words displeased me sorely; and I thought it marvellously unjust that tales which only send others to sleep, should consign me to the embraces of Sleep's less agreeable Sister.

“Kosem Kesamim,”—said I very plainly—“I am exceedingly glad thou hast given me the option before it was too late for a choice, and great is my obligation to this beautiful Lady for her timely announcement of the consequences of acquiring information. With your good leave, therefore, I will, for the present, decide upon ignorance and a reasonable length of life—and when my youth is fairly gone, and the golden bowl of enjoyment runs low towards the dregs, I shall be very happy to reverse my choice—and exchange the sunless days of old age for the Knowledge thou canst bestow,—at present—Love—Adventure—and Amusement suffice for thy unambitious Servant.”

“Thou hast judged as common men judge”—answered Kesamim coldly—but a ray of living fire flashed from his shadowy and indistinguishable features. “And thou hast shut against thyself the gates of my Domain.” Then—lifting up his arms—he continued in a low and exceedingly soft tone—“O thou mystic and lulling Ether, that pervadest the World of Night—circumfusing the Earth with a secret and sweet power—from the core of the wearied flowers to the restless hearts of men, thy influence extends,—arresting life only to renew it!—Solemn and Holy Sleep, come hither—and lock within thy dewy and tender arms the soul of thy subject here! For *me*—thou art not. As the stream dashes on night and day—as the fire which the Moon quells not in the breast of the Volcano—thy spirit hath no mastery over mine.”

As Kosem thus spoke, and while his last words thrilled

like a distant song in my ears, slumber came upon me. The cave, the Magician, faded from my view. I was alone with Sleep.

I woke with a singular sense of feebleness and exhaustion, and turning my dizzy eyes—beheld the walls and furniture of my own chamber in London. Asmodeus was seated by my side reading a Sunday Newspaper—his favourite reading.

“Ah!” said I, stretching myself with so great an earnestness, that I believed at first my stature had been increased by the malice of the Wizard, and that I stretched from one end of the room to the other—“Ah! dear Asmodeus, how pleasant it is to find myself on earth again! After all, these romantic wonders only do for a short time. Nothing like London when one has been absent from it upon a Syntax search after the Picturesque!”

“London is indeed a charming place,”—said the Devil—“all our fraternity are very fond of it—it is the custom for the Parisians to call it dull. What an instance of the vanity of patriotism—there is vice enough in it to make any reasonable man cheerful.”

“Yes; the gaiety of Paris is really a delusion. How poor its shops—how paltry its equipages—how listless its crowds—compared with those of London! If it was only for the pain in walking their accursed stones, sloping down to a river in the middle of the street—all sense of idle enjoyment would be spoilt. But in London—the hum, the stir, the din of Men—the activity and flush of life everywhere—the brilliant shops—the various equipages—the signs of luxury, wealth, restlessness, that meet you on all sides—give a much more healthful and vigorous bound to the spirits, than the indolent loungers of the Tuileries, spelling a thrice-read French paper which contains nothing, or sitting on chairs by the hour together, unwilling to stir because they have paid a penny for the seat—ever enjoy. O! if London would seem gay after Paris, how much more so after a visit to the interior of the Earth. And what is the news, my Asmodeus?”

“O, still the same—Elections everywhere. Men are choosing representatives of their good qualities—viz., their fine opinions. What a pity they cannot choose representatives of their bad qualities—viz., their unprincipled actions.”

“And so they do,” said I, very tartly. “The Tories do! (if what you told me when I last saw you at Kosem Kesamim’s be true). See them threatening here and bribing there. The Marquis of Salisbury turning out his tenants because they presume to dislike over-taxation—and Sir Roger Gresley assuring the world in an address that the sinews of war—*id est*, the corrupting exercise of extravagance—shall not be wanting to his return for Derbyshire. What are the Members returned by the Dukes of Newcastle and the Lords of Exeter but representatives not of Men’s fine opinions, but their unprincipled actions?”

“I never dispute,”—replied Asmodeus—“and I don’t value myself on the truth of my statements—’tis not the fashion below. Let us change the subject. The Theatres have re-opened. Apropos of them—I will tell you a fine instance of the futility of human ambition. Mr. Monck Mason took the King’s Theatre, saith Report—(which is the Creed of Devils)—in order to bring out an opera of his own, which Mr. Laporte, with a very uncourteous discretion, had thought fit to refuse. The Season passes—and Mr. Monck Mason has ruined himself without being able to bring out his opera after all! What a type of speculation. A Speculator is one who puts a needle in a hay-stack, and then burns all his hay without finding the needle. It is hard to pay too dear for one’s whistle—but still more hard if one never plays a tune on the whistle one pays for. Still the world has lost a grand pleasure in not seeing damned an Opera written by the Manager of the Opera-House,—it would have been such a consolation to all the Rejected Operatives,—it would have been the prettiest hardship entailed on a great man ever since the time of that Speaker who was forced himself to put the question whether he had been guilty of bribery, and should be expelled the House, and had the pleasure of hearing the Ayes predominate. *Je me mêle* with the affairs of the Theatre—they are in my diabolic province, you know. But if the Stage be the fosterer of Vice, as you know it is said, Vice just at this moment in England has very unattractive colours.”

“Ah, wait till we break the Monopoly. But even now have we not the ‘Hunchback?’”

“Yes; the incarnation of the golden mediocre: a stronger proof, by the hyperbolic praise it receives, of the decline of the Drama than even the abundance of trash

from which it gleams. Anything at all decent from a new Dramatic Author will obtain success far more easily than much higher merit in another line ; literary rivalry not having yet been directed much towards the Stage, there are not literary jealousies resolved and united against a Dramatist's as against a Poet's or a Novelist's success. Every one can praise those pretensions, however humble, which do not interfere with his own."

"It is very true ; there is never any very great merit, at least in a new Author, when you don't hear the abuse louder than the admiration. And now, Asmodeus, with your leave, I will prepare for breakfast, and our morning's walk."

"Oh, dear, dear London, dear even in October ! Regent-street, I salute you !—Bond-street, my good fellow, how are you ? And you, O beloved Oxford-street, whom the 'Opium Eater' called 'stony-hearted,' and whom I, eating no opium, and speaking as I find, shall ever consider the most kindly and maternal of all streets—the street of the middle classes—busy without uproar, wealthy without ostentation. Ah, the pretty ankles that trip along thy pavement ! Ah, the odd country-cousin-bonnets that peer into thy windows, which are lined with cheap yellow shawls, price £1 4s. marked in the corner ! Ah, the brisk young lawyers flocking from their quarters at the back of Holborn ! Ah, the quiet old ladies, living in Duchess-street, and visiting thee with their eldest daughters in the hope of a bargain ! Ah, the bumpkins from Norfolk just disgorged by the Bull and Mouth—the soldiers—the milliners—the Frenchmen—the swindlers, the porters with four-post beds on their back, who add the excitement of danger to that of amusement ! The various, shifting, motley group, that belong to Oxford-street, and Oxford-street alone. What thoroughfares equal thee in variety of human specimens ! in the choice of objects—for remark—satire—admiration ! Beside thee other streets seem chalked out for a sect,—narrow-minded and devoted to a *coterie*. Thou alone art Catholic—all receiving. Regent-street belongs to foreigners, cigars, and ladies in red silk, whose characters are above scandal. Bond-street belongs to dandies and picture-buyers. St. James's to club-loungers, and young men in the Guards, wit' mustachios properly blackened by the *cire* of Mr. Delcroix ; but thou, Oxford-

street, what class can especially claim thee as its own? Thou mockest at oligarchies; thou knowest nothing of select orders! Thou art liberal as air—a chartered Libertine; accepting the homage of all, and retaining the stamp of none. And to call *thee* stony-hearted!—certainly thou art so to Beggars—to people who have not the WHEREWITHAL; but thou wouldst not be so respectable if thou wert not capable of a certain reserve to paupers. Thou art civil enough, in all conscience, to those who have a shilling in their pocket;—those who have not, why do they live at all?”

“That’s not exactly what surprises me,” said Asmodeus; “I don’t wonder *why* they live, but *where* they live: for I perceive Boards in every Parish proclaiming that no Vagrant—that is, no person who is too poor to pay for his lodging—will be permitted to stay there. Where then does he stay?—every Parish unites against him—not a spot of ground is lawful for him to stand on. At length he is passed on to his own parish; the meaning of which is, that not finding a decent livelihood in one place, the laws prevent his seeking it at any other. By the way, it would not be a bad plan to substitute a Vagrant for a Fox, and, to hunt him regularly, you might hunt him with a pack of respectable persons belonging to the middle class, and eat him when he’s caught. That would be the shortest way to get rid of the race. You might proclaim a reward for every Vagrant’s head: it would gain the King more honour with the rate-payers than clearing the country of wolves won to his predecessor. What wolf eats so much as a Beggar? What wolf so troublesome, so famished, and so good for nothing? People are quite right in judging a man’s virtue by his wealth; for when a man has not a shilling he soon grows a rogue. He must live on his wits, and a man’s wits have no conscience when his stomach is empty. We are all very poor in Hell—very; if we were rich, Satan says, justly, that we should become idle. That’s the reason, you know, according to Hume, that an Established Church is idle; you feed it up to the chin that it may go to sleep and do no mischief.”

“None of your ‘Slaps at the Church,’ or the Publishers of the ‘Penny Magazine’ will be at you.”

“No; my ‘slaps’ give no information; their truth is too stale: but what a very droll thing it is in your Ministers to

take up all other people for publishing a penny paper, and then to set up a penny paper themselves. One would think they were booksellers, and wanted the monopoly in the way of trade. They cry stinking fish that they may hawk about their own haddock without rivalry; they'll sell cheese and candles next on the same principle. But a truce to general observations, let us become personal. You see," continued Asmodeus, "that elderly Gentleman crossing, with so musing an air, into Vere-street: his eyes bent on the ground, and his lips muttering as he goes. What think you, he is meditating?—No! you can never guess. He is an example of the education of a public school carried to its height, in order that you may then fairly judge of its utility in after life. In a word, that elderly Gentleman is making Latin Verses. It is the study, the occupation, the delight of his existence. His mind feeds upon longs and shorts, and never commits a greater inconstancy from its mistress than attempting a flirtation with Sapphics, or a tempting Alcaic. Ever since he left School he has so employed himself. He has large estates; he is of ancient birth. What are these to him; he knows nothing of the '*grata arva*,' except in an elegy, nor of the '*venerabile nomen*,' except as a very tag-ending, to be found in the *Gradus*. Immediately after breakfast he retires to his Library, and begins perhaps a Latin Epistle in imitation of Ovid; he corrects it in his walks, and copies it out fair after dinner. Business, pleasure, the pelting of the pitiless 'Reform,' the Bank Committee, the East India Charter, the indignation of the Planters at robbing them of the fellow-creatures whom they have bought and paid for, break not on his dignified repose. New books he sneers at with a sarcastic quotation: he has heard of Scott, and has put him in a Poem in the vocative case of Scotus. Byron he considers unclassical—the rest of Authorship is a world unknown—'Shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.'

"If he had not been educated to this 'tenor of the mind,' you would say he was a monomaniac, and would hint at the skill of Sir George Tuthill. But how, as it is, can you blame him? nay, you must admire, you must revere. He is one among the few who fulfil to the letter the classical objects of your Universal Education. He was taught as a boy that Latin verses were the end and aim of human ambition,—he believes as a man what he was taught as a boy.

Is not this exactly what education ought to accomplish?—to continue through maturity the studies of youth! Assuredly!—if the education of a Public School does not make a man write Latin verses all his life, it belies itself and teaches nothing. Excellent old gentleman,—what a noble employment for a man of his years! With such an ear for a false quantity, his opinions must needs be prodigiously sound. What a pity that you have not more like him—and that your matured Etonians prefer deriving *no* profit at all from their education, than to study the useful art of linking dactyls and spondees—

‘Ergo hominum genus incassum frustrâque laborat—
Semper, et in curis consumit inanibus ævom.’*—

“Why, what is this, Asmodeus?—only think of the Devil railing at verses, and quoting Lucretius!”

“Lucretius! Oh, he is our legitimate property!—the Monks consigned *him* to us long ago—because being a Heathen, who wrote some sixty years before Christ, he did not write like a Christian. We have him below—safe and sound—a present from ‘The Fathers.’ But now turn to that handsome Lady of a certain age—she in the grey silk gown—who moves along with so jaunty and careless an air,—that is a lady who committed a very singular action. As there are persons with one idea—she is a person of one action. She is an actress of talent; a young gentleman, just of age, fell in love with her some years since. He went about asserting that she was the most virtuous, and therefore, I need not add, the most calumniated, woman in the world. Pleased, perhaps, with the youth and inexperience of her lover, the Actress resolved to prove herself deserving of the good opinion of her which he had thus innocently formed. She refused him, therefore, all connexion save that of the purest friendship; but, nevertheless, she did not scruple to receive the most splendid jewels—bank-notes—a house in town—carriage, &c. Alarmed at the news of this expensive connexion, the parents of this gentleman (he had inherited his property from an uncle) hurry to town—they endeavour to open his eyes—they fail. The lady opens them herself. Among his other imprudences, our young heir takes to races and gambling. He

* [The human race, therefore, labours always in vain and to no purpose, and consumes its existence in empty cares.]

becomes seriously embarrassed—ruin stares him in the face—he throws his affairs into the hands of his guardians in despair. At this time he receives the following letter from the Actress :—

‘My dear young Friend,—I have been charmed with your inexperience, and I am now about to give you wisdom. I am all that the world says I am, and what you assert I am not. But I am agreeable, good-natured, and generous, as a set-off to my errors, and to my greatest error of all—my approach to my thirty-fifth year. Your relations are angry—your property is involved—you want money—and your guardians are cursing the artful minx on whom you lavished so much : I drop them my best stage curtesy for their good opinion. Accompanying this, you will receive all the jewels you have ever given me—the deeds of the house—all the bank-notes, carefully pinned together, in a blue silk bag, of which I make you a present. The carriage only I keep, because I don’t well see how in a gentlemanlike manner you could take it back again. Don’t be ashamed of receiving these. I only took them as a loan, laughing in my sleeve at you all the time, and because I knew that if your young feelings did not exhaust their folly upon me they would on somebody less disinterested. The time has now arrived when you want these trifles ; there they are ; if I kept them it would be like taking goods under false pretences. You gave them, believing me the reverse of what I am. Adieu ! I would ask you to come and see me in my new part—but I think we had better separate for a year or two. Go abroad. Heaven bless you.

‘Yours, &c.—.’”

“Did the young gentleman take back the effects?”

“He took the letter to his father to show him how wrongly he had abused the Actress—and the father working on his vanity made him see what a fool he had been. No, the son did not retain the presents, but the father did, and wrote the Actress a very polite letter of thanks. The young man went abroad, and is probably by this time as wise and as avaricious as his elders. You see how well on rare occasions a bad person can behave. It was vanity that made this woman love the *éclat* of seeming disin-

terested—and the very fact of being esteemed made her capable of being worthy of it. . . . But we have wandered too far up the street for characters,—we are just by Holborn—the shoal is lower down.”

“Nay,” said I, “look yonder; you see that thin, handsome gentleman—in the blue coat—there is something remarkably pensive in his appearance. What and who is he?”

“A man who has just discovered that all the thoughts, hopes, and dreams of his youth were a delusion. He fell in love at twenty-three—the orthodox male age for the passion. His beloved was beautiful and devoted—they were exceedingly poor—they could not marry. He went to India; for fifteen years he toiled—he slaved—he braved the climate—he made money—and refusing all pleasure—denying himself all expense, he remained for ever faithful to his mistress, for ever pondering over her image. He returns to England—he hastens to his long-loved Isabel—he finds her——”

“Dead?”

“No, indeed!”

“Married?”

“Much worse than either. Alive and single—and not so much changed by Time as he might reasonably have expected. He is enchanted—he proposes—he marries,—and finds his ideal of his dreams—the goddess of his youth—a cross fiery shrew, who leads him the life of a dog. So much for the sense of early attachments, and the wisdom of undying constancy; and yet you poetical mortals *will* go on preaching up the beautiful notion of two people who know nothing of each other, except that they are young, fond, and handsome, moping away their better days, in order to obtain at last that disappointment which, in nine cases out of ten, will follow their marriage—as it follows the marriage of much wiser people than they.”

“Ah! Asmodeus,” said I, “rail not at the mysteries of the divine passion. Constancy has great charms—very great—especially in one’s mistress to oneself. *Vice versâ*, it is certainly attended with ennui. But to tell you the truth, Asmodeus, I am inclined to believe, that—notwithstanding all its delusions and deceits—a real honest and passionate love—if one could possibly procure such a thing—does more to dissipate the time agreeably than at least any other *innocent amusement*.”

"It was under the same idea," said Asmodeus, "that a friend of mine, a French Marquis, accepted the invitation of a Provincial Noble, who had a large family of grown-up daughters—mind that!—to spend some time at his country-house. The Marquis was known to be one of the most fastidious and difficult of the metropolitan *elegants*. His host, when they were travelling down together, began to consider with himself how his guest was to be amused.

'We have excellent fishing in our river,' said he, 'and of a warm day we'll make parties; and while we boat on the river, tents shall be spread for us, and refreshments prepared among the woods. Quite a Boccaccio scene it will be!'

'Ah! excuse me,' said the Marquis with a shiver. 'I never fish.—Boating and tents! Oh! you little know my delicate constitution.'

'You hunt at least, Marquis?'

'Never!' was the emphatic reply.

'Shoot?'

'Shoot—No! *mon cher*.'

'Play at billiards?'

'Not a stroke!'

'At cards?'

'Never touch them!'

'Well, well'—said the host, considerably alarmed—'thank heaven, we have an excellent library.'

'Library! Do I look like a man who reads books?'

'My God, then, what *will* you do to amuse yourself?'

'I, my dear friend? Oh, don't trouble yourself about me. I shall give myself up altogether to *seduction*!'

"Agreeable intelligence to a *pere de famille*. But, seriously, I have a great mind to fall in love. If you were half such a devil as Mephistopheles, you would find me out some gentle Margaret or another—beautiful, amiable—a sort of thing one could marry!"

"Marry! What are you about? Can you meditate such a design?"

"Why not?"

"Oh! there then we part for ever. Marriage either gets rid of your devils by the presence of an angel—ehem! there's a pretty play upon words—or else it supplies their place with one whose name is Legion."

"Pooh—nonsense! None of your old cant maxims about

marriage. I know them all by heart—either the extreme of misery or bliss!—as if life had any extremes at all for more than a quarter of an hour together. Depend upon it, marriage is nothing one way or the other—as they say of a parrot's life in a cage—when one's used to it. Therefore, oh Devil! I give you fair notice that I intend to fall in love; and I expect, through your aid, to have some very wild and piquant adventures in the course of my folly."

Asmodeus bowed; and, as we were now in Regent-street, stepped into Verey's for a glass of ice. I followed his example.

I know not how it is, but my frame is one peculiarly susceptible to ennui. There's no man so instantaneously bored. What activity does this singular constitution in all cases produce! All who are sensitive to ennui do eight times the work of a sleek, contented man. Anything but a large chair by the fireside, and a family circle! Oh! the bore of going every day over the same exhausted subjects, to the same dull persons of respectability; yet that is the doom of all domesticity. Then *pleasure*! A wretched play—a hot opera, under the ghostly fathership of Mr. Monck Mason—a dinner of sixteen, with such silence or *such* conversation!—a water-party to Richmond, to catch cold and drink bad sauterne—a flirtation, which fills all your friends with alarm, and your writing desk with love-letters you don't like to burn, and are afraid of being seen; nay, published, perhaps, one fine day, that you may go by some d—d pet name ever afterwards!—hunting in a thick mist—shooting in furze bushes, that "feelingly persuade you what you are"—"the bowl," as the poets call the bottles of claret that never warm you, but whose thin stream, like the immortal river,—

"Flows, and as it flows, for ever may flow on;"

or the port that warms you indeed: yes, into a bilious headache and a low fever. Yet all these things are pleasures!—parts of social enjoyment! They fill out the corners of the grand world—they inspire the minor's dreams—they pour crowds into St. James's, Doctors' Commons, and Melton Mowbray—they—Oh! confound them all;—it bores one even to write about them.

Only just returned to London, and, after so bright a panegyric on it, I already weary of the variety of its samenesses. Shall I not risk the fate of Faust, and fall in love

—ponderously and *bonâ fide*? Or shall I go among the shades of the deceased, and amuse myself with chatting to Dido and Julius Cæsar? Verily, reader, I leave you for the present to guess my determination. You see the courage I have displayed, and the countries I have visited, towards dispelling ennui. You may say that I could have chosen a more respectable companion than a Devil. My dear Sir,—not if I had chosen from the higher classes, I assure you.

No. VIII.

Leisure.—Montaigne's Character.—An Egotistical Reverie.—The Tacitus.—The Pindar.—The Apollo's Son.—The Rosa Matilda, and the Plato of.—**THE KEEPSAKE!!!**—Scott's Monument.—The Duke of Buccleuch's Delicacy.—New Edition of Byron.—The Supplements to the Spectator.—The Dramatic Committee.—The Censor.—Political allusions on the Stage, their Expediency considered.—Should Theatres be classified?—Mrs. Hall's Buccaneer.—The Westminster Election.—Mr. D'Israeli and Colonel Grey.

LITERARY ease!—what a sentiment of happiness—what a sense of quiet, of deep, of virtuous enjoyment is conveyed in that expression!—How many classical recollections throng around us, when we recall, in that one phrase, the *otium* and the *dignitas* of the wise of old!—Tivoli crowded with its white retreats—Baïæ and its Fountains—the Villa of Cicero—the Gardens of Pliny—the magnificent Palace of Lucullus, equally learned and voluptuous.—Nor, for my own part, can I ever chew the cud of that delightful phrase without especially bringing to my mind's eye a certain antique and venerable chamber in one of the grey *Chateaux* of *Perigord*,—crowded with a medley of well-worn volumes—and the light that enters from one high window resting on the comely front of the Lord of Montaigne. That most persuasive gossip, who, among Essayists, is what *Le Sage* was among Novelists—wisest while most trifling—and most brilliant when most at ease—seems, to my fancy, to have enjoyed the very ideal of a life of literary leisure.—He had seen enough of the actual world to be contented with retirement;—and his natural disposition, so remote from the dread hypochondriasm customary to men of letters, made Solitude the nurse no less of cheerful than of profound thoughts;—the philosophy of a Happy Temper smoothed

the pillow of disease, and kept—if I may use the term—the mental as the bodily veins, in a healthful and lively flow—so that he drank in the blessings of leisure without its ennui: and study never wearied him with a sense of its futility—nor solitude with that of its vegetative sameness. It has been my lot to cultivate letters from my earliest youth—but I have never attained to the leisure and the calm which should belong to the pursuit. At fits and starts I have heaped together what learning I possess—and pardon me the vanity—before I was twenty the elaborate Parr esteemed my correspondence as that of no ordinary bookman—but the wheel at my heart always forbade me rest—and the Passions hurried me from books to men—from study to pleasure—from contemplation to action—with so fierce and restless an alternation, that the life of ease—which I still covet—I have never, save at hasty and brief intervals, enjoyed. Sometimes, indeed, I charm myself with pictures of a future never likely to be mine—and imagine, that when the last days of my youth are over, and that tranquil period in which the Autumn of life steals over its hot and laborious summer has cooled the pulses which now beat too wildly for repose, some quiet retreat—the *rura et silentium*—among old books and green fields—may afford me the Utopia and the Euthanasia of literary life. Then, too, I charm myself with the hope of weaving slowly and as a luxury, not a task, some such work as the world shall not willingly let die, and which may bind my name to something more solid than those reeds blown to and fro by the breath of popular opinion, which, as yet, are the only witness of what I am. But as I have said, the chances are that such a future never will be reserved for fruition; my mind has exhausted my body prematurely; and the grave, perhaps, already yawns for its prey; but the spirit that is within me will quail not to the last,—and the despondency of the nerves shall not dim the hope of the soul. O the bright power of endurance that the Great Heart can evoke from its own wrecks! Wisely did the ancients build up a temple to Fortitude—wisely has the Poet told us—

“To bear is to conquer our fate.”

Without courage there is no virtue—with courage we are the emperors of earth—and trample, with an angel's hope, upon the fiends of hell—

"Rex est qui metuit nihil;
 [Rex est, qui cupiet nihil.]
 Hoc regnum sibi quisque dat!" *

If it has not often been my fate to take long draughts of that Pierian ease, which is the ordinary nectar of many of the cultivators of letters, the rareness of the luxury makes, perhaps, its excess; and now (as Asmodeus leaves me to myself, to pursue his own avocations in the fertile province of Amorous Intrigue, which constitutes his proper domain, marrying some and divorcing others) among my books and papers—"I crop my flowery food."—I love, in these moments of literary relaxation, to blend every kind and order of literary work; through novels—essays—philosophy—politics—newspapers—pamphlets—annuals—I eat my way.

"All in a lonely study,
 Where books are in great plenty,
 A scholar can devour
 More sense in an hour
 Than Brougham can talk in twenty.

In books of geography
 He makes the maps to flutter;
 A river or a sea
 Are to him a dish of tea,
 And a kingdom bread-and-butter." †

But above all my recent reading, commend me to that manual of the magnates—that horn-book of the high-bred—which is bound in red silk, and styled "The Keepsake." I had just made the above exclamation when my friend M—— entered. Now, M—— is what is called a man of society. He is a table wit, and an oral critic—but he never writes. He is too clever for print—all his essence evaporates after the moment.

"I agree with you," said he—"commend me to 'The Keepsake.' It is admirable: the benevolence of the design is alone sufficient to render it immortal. What a noble idea—to think of a nursery for the baby intellects of the Peerage! It is a great institution of charity for the

* [He is king who fears nothing;
 He is king who desires nothing.
 This kingdom each one gives to himself.

Thus chaunts the chorus towards the close of the second act of the *Thyestes* of Seneca.

† Shenstone.

paupers in mind. It is a sort of copy-book for grown-up masters and misses to write sentences in."

"Nonsense," said I—"you are satirical. I praise 'The Keepsake' in sober earnest. It has, in the first place, a Tacitus in Lord Dover. The Tacitus of 'The Keepsake'—a pretty phrase, is it not? Its leading article, unlike the trashy tales of other annuals, is an historical sketch. How profound! The pretty dears like to be instructed as well as amused. The grown-up children are as good and as precise, you see, as Miss Edgeworth's real ones, who always seemed to me to be made of wood. I fancy them sitting down after breakfast, with their chins on their hands; and commencing the leading article—'Vicissitudes in the Life of a Princess of the House of Brunswick, by Lord Dover.'"

M——. "The style of that article?"——

A——. "Is incomparable—I allow it. Such an aristocratic ease—so utterly unlike the English which people take pains with. Observe, for instance:—'It was to her (*the Countess Koningsmark's*) assistance that the Princess principally owed her escape. *She* collected for *her* whatever of money and of jewels could be found in the palace; *GAVE her* an old and trustworthy man-servant of *her own*, who spoke French and German, to accompany *her*, and one of *her own femmes de chambre.*' Now pray observe the agreeable confusion of those *hers*—evidently meant on purpose to exercise the attention of the reader—a sort of intellectual puzzle for the drawing-room—a kind of emulative rival to—

'If Tom's father is John's son,
What relation is Tom to John?'

"Then, too, mark the noble indifference to common people with which the historian announces that the Countess *gave* the Princess her servant—an absolute present—like a horse or a *calèche*. *GAVE!*—Oh! the happy expression! But what did she give?—there's the master-stroke. A servant?—Yes! you or I would have said a servant—Lord Dover says emphatically, a *man-servant*. This is worthy the phraseology of Mr. Lister. I should think the author of 'Arlington' said *man-servant*. Oh, what a butler is here undone by being a Lord and an historian!"

M——. Turning over nother page. "But lo! an in-

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stance of brevity in the Tacitus of 'The Keepsake' surpassing that of Tacitus of the annals. 'He proposed, at the same time, to the Chevalier, to unite his fortune with theirs in the undertaking. D'Aubant *accepted* (?) with readiness, joined his funds, &c.' Accepted?—accepted what? There is something delicious in this supercilious omission of the substantive—in this haughty disregard for the King's English and the subject's comprehension. None of your Gibbonian superfluity of words with Lord Dover! 'He accepts with readiness,' and leaves you to determine whether it is an invitation to dinner, or a proposition for destroying puppy dogs."

A——. "The Tacitus of 'The Keepsake' is immediately succeeded by its Pindar—the Honourable Henry Liddell—a gentleman who, inspired by the Olympic *Game*—Anglicè grouse—bursts forth into a dithyrambic upon the moors:—

'The moors—the moors—the bonny brown moors.'

This inspired poet—the Bard of the Double-Barrel—is, like his immortal model, very much given to that boldness of phrase which usually contradicts in the end of the verse the assertion of the beginning. For instance, he inquires, with a striking enthusiasm,—

'Oh, know ye the region in spring more fair,
Than the *banks* and the *glens* of the moorland *bare*.'

Now, if it have banks and glens, how comes it bare? How?—why, because the last word in the verse before it was 'fair!' The Honourable Henry Liddell is a very joyous poet—cheerful as Homer—but as he proceeds he grows mighty pathetic. The Duke of Athol, with whom he used to dine, is dead:—

'And the coronach rings on the mountains of Blair,
For the lord of the woods and the moorlands bare.'

Just observe how thoroughly in keeping with the sporting genius of the Honourable Henry Liddell is the cause of his sorrow. It is so like a younger brother to mourn for the loss of the nobleman who cooked his grouse for him. Such are the grand emotions which agitate the soul of the Pindar of 'The Keepsake.' But the Pindar of 'The Keepsake' has a rival in the Honourable John Hobart Cradock, who lately, to the astonishment of the world, elongated that melodious name into Caradoc. A minstrel

in 'The Court Journal' informs us that the said Honourable John is—

'Apollo's son in form and lute.'

Apollo's son thus emulates his sire:—

'Then rouse, ye youths! 'tis joy, *not labour*,
To hurl a lance and wield a *sabre*.'

Apollo must be proud of such an heir to his lyre!"

M——. "But not contented with the laity of genius, the presiding spirit of the Work has invoked also the muse of the hierarchy, and rejoiceth mightily in the minstrelsy of Archdeacon Spencer. The Tacitus, the Pindar, 'the Apollo's son in form and lute,'—all shrink before this Reverend Rosa Matilda of 'The Keepsake.' Hark!

'Where the consecrated willow
Graceful shades the flowery shore,
And the sound of distant billow
Gently steals from Ocean's roar.'

There (viz., in the Archdeacon's 'heart of hearts')

'There the eye whose partial blindness
Could no wayward faults perceive;
There the voice of reverent kindness
Still, in *fadeless image*, live.'

The fadeless image of a voice! Well done, Archdeacon. But enough—

'On the Rose's flushing bosom
Warm the setting sunbeams play;
On the violet's *kindred* blossom
Fonder still the lights delay.'

"Who shall laugh at the Church now? Who shall say its Archdeacons are not men of solid intellect and sound doctrine. Every line of the Archdeacon Spencer is a rap on the knuckles of the Radicals. The Honourable Grantley Berkeley is not less diverting than his fellow-labourers. He favours us with a moral tale of seduction—it really is quite delightful to see the Aristocracy, poor creatures,—so good, and so industrious. He informs us of a woodcutting poacher, whom 'a wholesome punishment given in strict justice, not only reformed in his manner of life, but caused in him such a distaste to the company of the miserable and disgusting objects with whom it was his lot to be confined,' &c. This is a prodigiously fine remark—quite original—and proves the propriety of shutting up young

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offenders with miserable and disgusting objects. Why does not the Hon. Grantley Berkeley favour us with hints upon prison discipline, and the tendency of corrupt company to reform young woodcutters. It would be novel at least. But perhaps the Honourable Grantley Berkeley is only profound by fits—poetry is evidently his forte—witness—‘The *less* birds had long ceased their summer song, and were seen flocking together in search of the ripening berry that peeped in tempting luxury between the varying and many-coloured leaves, *which, like the vest on the bosom of beauty, were about to be withdrawn on the gentle sigh of the waving wind approaching like a welcome lover!*’ All this is undeniably fine! there is a simple grandeur—a—a—a *je ne sçai quoi* about it, that convinces one that the Honourable Grantley Berkeley is the Plato of ‘The Keepsake.’”

M——. “Seriously—it is worth some critic’s while to single out this annual from its fellows, because it is one with a peculiar ambition—the ambition of having lord and lady contributors: it insults the Public by supposing they value trash by Honourable Henries; it sprouts forth into yearly ineptitude, and attempts to bring silliness into a solar system. So much for the ‘*Icon Lordfannicke!*’”

A——. “What think you of the design of perpetuating Abbotsford to Sir Walter’s family, as being the best monument to himself?”

M——. “Why, it smells of the Aristocracy who managed the Committee, and are always for ‘entails.’ It is a plan open to objections. In the first place, the hereditary transmission of the house is no monument at all to Scott: pilgrims would resort to Abbotsford equally whether in the possession of his children or that of strangers. In the second place, if, by a special act of the Legislature, the house is always to go to the heir-male with only its inadequate estate, it is likely, some years hence, to be an incumbrance rather than a blessing. Thirdly,—There is something offensive in the principle of sanctifying the worst of all laws—that of rigid entail—by one popular instance. Rewards to public men should not partake of the nature of family benefits, especially where the son, who receives the honour, is not publicly distinguished by a single one of the qualities of the father, for whose virtues or talents—not for whose name—they ought to be de-

signed. These reasons make me waver as to the merits of the plan, (although, by the way, my name is included in the list of the Committee;) and the only reflection that combats them is the feeling that poor Scott himself would have felt the project as the most acceptable homage to his genius.—But *à propos* of the monument. How good in the Duke of Buccleugh to excuse the amount of his donation by saying, it is exactly because he is rich that it would be bad taste in him to be liberal! ‘Only think,’ he says, ‘if I were to outdo the rest of the Peers, would not that be monstrous improper?’ So that his Grace is a niggard merely out of motives of delicacy!”

A——. “What a beautiful edition of Byron this is of Murray’s! It has only one fault—it contains too much. The beauty of the small poems, which used to be so conspicuous in the old editions, is quite drowned in the little rivulets of trash which have been poured into the present. Everything that Byron would most cautiously have banished has been most carefully inserted; and the best joke in the world is, that Mr. Lockhart—at least I suppose it is that gentleman,—his pardon if I wrong him)—says, with a sanctimonious air,—(on inserting those beautiful and most characteristic lines by Lord Byron, ‘On hearing that his wife was ill,’ which are given in Lady Blessington’s ‘Conversations, ’)—that, forsooth, ‘having recently found their way into circulation, he (we) must include them, though *with reluctance*, in this collection.’ Why, what a puling piece of nonsense is this! ‘Reluctance!’—when the man’s running into every hole and corner to pick up every dirty, thrown-away scrap of Byron’s writing, whether intended for publication or not,—whether worthy of publication or not,—not a line of the most despicable doggerel has escaped him. And he prates of ‘reluctance’ about one, not only of the best of Byron’s minor poems, but one which,—affecting, as the editor of this edition ostentatiously does, to illustrate Byron’s disposition and feelings;—it would have been a most unpardonable omission *not* to have inserted: but the fact is, that Murray and his *clique* consider poor Byron their own property; and if anyone else touches him, they start up, and cry ‘sacrilege!’ Thus do ordinary men trade upon great ones.”

M——. “I see on your table two Supplements which ‘The Spectator’ has published, one on ‘the working of the

House of Commons,'* the other on 'Public Expenditure.'† What admirable documents they are! The first gives a most luminous survey of the internal working of the representative assembly—of its functions and machinery—of its committees—forms—hours of sitting, &c. It contains a table showing the entire transactions of the last Session; it displays, in the closest and most masterly manner, the obstructions and delays of the present system, and suggests remedies well worthy of attention, and containing at least the principle and germ of a sound reform. The mass of information—the industry—the intelligence—the general fairness of this document—are beyond all praise.‡ A more valuable appendix to the Bill of Reform has not been published. The Supplement on Public Expenditure is not a less extraordinary effort of spirit and ability. It gives a general account of the Expenditure of 1831-2—shows what may be reduced—what not. The Civil List, Pensions, &c.—all are considered. In fact, it displays a research, a lucid order of arrangement, one tithe of which, if displayed by a Member in an opening speech, would have gained him a permanent reputation. It is by efforts like these, made at great risk—at enormous expense—with a noble direction of judgment that consults what may instruct the people, and disdains to pander for lucre to their prejudices and their passions—it is also by philosophical and practical principles, applied to the matter of such facts, and calling the chaos into harmony, that we are made deservedly proud of the better portion of the English Press. And 'The Examiner' and 'The Spectator' have really done what the periodicals in Anne's time vainly boasted, called Wisdom to the breakfast-table, and brought home the best part of ethics (political knowledge) from the closet to men's daily understanding and ordinary business. These, not palaces and columns, are the public works which a people should covet, and of which legislators should be vain."

A——. "Apropos of Parliament and Committees, how good 'Blackwood' was in the 'Noctes' of last month touching the Dramatic Committee!"

M——. "Ay, what a poor figure the players make off the stage—their logic is preposterous. But the hardest

* For the week ending September 29th.

† For the week ending November 3rd.

‡ Only in the lists of Divisions do we note some inaccuracies: we speak here from personal experience.

thing of all is in the strictures of the 'Athenæum,' which visit the follies of the witnesses on the questions of the Committee, and think the Committee unwise because the actors were ninnies. On the contrary, there never perhaps was a Parliamentary Committee which, in so unprecedentedly short a time, examined so many witnesses, extracted so much information, or, from the contradictory elements of contending interests, wrought out a result so generally satisfactory to the public."

A——. "I suppose we shall have a Bill on the Report next session, but I wish to Heaven we could get rid of the vexatious superfluity of the 'Censor!'"

M——. "That I fear would be impossible at present, because the Legislature are not prepared to admit the political allusions that would instantly follow an unshackled drama; and yet the effect of political allusions would be new life to the stage—it would keep up that connection between the Actual and the Romantic which is necessary to sustain the general interest in mimic representations. Every one may perceive how eager the public are to extract from plays the most far-fetched allusions to the present time. If this were made a part of the legitimate province of the author, the theatres would overflow. In the early days of the drama, political allusions were common—they abound in our great dramatists—they are redundant even in the dramas of the tyrannical age of Charles II. In Anne's time the cold and heavy tragedy of Cato would never have been popular, but for the political deductions drawn from it by both parties. The English, more than any people in the world, require the strong seasoning of politics to attract them to the stage, because they run more after daily politics than any of their neighbours, and have less sympathy with the abstract and ideal. If there were no censor, political allusions would abound in all new works, and thus the stage would become popular. Of course this would produce evil as well as good, but the good would preponderate in the long run. The monopolists themselves allow, that as regards *morality* the public are more vigilant than the Censor himself—that what escapes the last has been hissed by the first. They make the office solely one of *political expediency*—but the question ought to be fairly faced—why should politics be banished from the stage of a free people? The same good taste that banishes indecencies

would also banish anything that passed the proper bounds of decorum in politics; for politics are morals, and like morals have their *To Prepon*. In fact, so far from inflaming the popular passion for politics, the stage would become an outlet for their expression; and many who now go to Political Unions would, were politics *acted* on the stage, resort to the theatres."

M——. "The principle of classifying the play-houses, allowing one to act tragedy, another vaudeville, &c., is warmly embraced by certain parties; the 'Athenæum' advocates that system."

A——. "But who will bell the cat? Where are the legal terms by which you can define and classify plays? Who now can define the legitimate drama so strictly but what the definition may be always evaded. Classification is, in fact, impossible, unless the theatres are brought entirely under arbitrary control. In France the government classifies theatres, because it pays for the support of theatres; but any theatre there could, if it please, evade the classification. It does not—why? because it is not its interest to do so. Leave the same grand principle to act upon the English managers. The small theatres will act whatever they can act best, because it will be their interest to do so; and plays will thus fall into a natural classification, according to the size, actors, and capacities of a theatre. The interference of legislators cannot do better than common sense, and it may do much worse;—besides, they have no business to control private speculations unless they first turn them, as in France, into public institutions, and pay, as in that country, 80,000*l.* per annum for their support. It is the height of absurdity and unfairness in the Legislation to interfere only for the purpose of forbidding the direction of other people's capital, except in one channel, and then, if they are ruined, to leave its victims to suffer for the vexatious injustice of the intermeddler."

M——. (taking up a new Novel—"And what is this?")

A——. "Mrs. Hall's *Buccaneer*—an admirable historical romance—full of interest—and with many new views of character. It is an Historical Romance, and yet unborrowed from Scott—it has not his mannerism—it is *sui generis*, which is saying a great deal. The author has introduced Cromwell in the foreground as the principal cha-

racter, and done justice to the genius of the man : but he appears too often, and interferes too much in the love-story of the book. It is not that such an introduction does not belong to the *vrai*—it sins against the *vraisemblable*—it requires great judgment and also great luck to make us feel that a hero is never taken liberties with. I think, therefore, that Cromwell would have been more effective if he had appeared more rarely, and if he had been wholly withdrawn from the love-scenes ; but then the story might have been less interesting to the general reader ; and perhaps the dignity of Cromwell is designedly sacrificed to the stimulus of the tale. The plot, otherwisc, is extremely well conceived—very artful and progressing—the story never flags—and you open at once upon the main interest. The two best characters are a serving-girl (whose simplicity, kindliness, and beauty of heart are delineated with all the delicacy of womanhood and the felicity of genius) and a deformed youth, her lover, who, with the good qualities of a fine nature, unites the ire, the peevishness, the suspicion, that the sense of his personal inferiority produces. It is in charming unison with the character of Barbara (the damsel I have described) to make her love this ill-favoured youth, and to be attracted by the strength of his intellect ; you feel that she is just the person to have disregarded beauty in a suitor, and to have been proud of the homage of a superior intellect. The innocent weakness of her nature is such as only a woman could have wrought out—if a man had attempted that character the girl would have been a fool. She is just preserved from silliness by a hand that stays the character at the verge of simplicity—one step more—one step less, and Barbara would have been no creation ; as it is, she is at once original and perfect. There is a villain, of course, in the book, but he is too cowardly. Women rarely paint villains well ; they don't, like Shakspeare or Massinger, intoxicate themselves with a sense of the great power that accompanies great crimes—they make despicable villains instead of magnificent ones—which last alone belong to tragedy and grave fiction. The Stukelys and Mawworms ought to appertain to comedy. But to give you an idea of the nerve and vigour of the style, just read this passage, in which the villain meets his fate, beginning with ' Roupall and the youth crept stealthily down the cliff by a secret path,' &c."

M——. "Ah! this is very fine. Mrs. Hall has a considerable mastery of style. Her Irish sketches possess great beauty of composition, and there is a little tale of hers in 'The Amulet' this year, which is written and conceived with extraordinary skill—the idea is even grand. A woman—simple, kind, but of a high and religious mind, is devotedly attached to a reprobate and ruffian husband; she endures his slights—his alienation—his brutality, with untiring meekness, and unconquered love; but at last, when her young family are growing up, the husband begins to initiate her son in his own career of crime. She remonstrates—implores in vain—she cautions her son against his father. The ruffian discovers it, and threatens her thus—

'As sure as you are a living woman,' he continued, with that concentrated rage which is a thousand times more dangerous than impetuous fury, 'as sure as you are a living woman you shall repent of this. I see the way to punish your wilfulness; if you oppose me in the management of my children, one by one they shall be taken from you to serve my purposes! You may look for them in vain, until (he added with a fiendish smile) you read their names in the columns of the Newgate Calendar.' The deep and stern heart of the mother is now aroused. The husband fulfils his threat—he commits a robbery, in which he endeavours to entangle his son. A great and solemn determination nerves the mother, and she informs against her guilty husband, as the only means to save the bodies and souls of her guiltless children. Mind, this determination is accomplished with such tenderness, that the awe of it does not revolt. I esteem the conception of this story to be one of the most dread and tragic in modern composition—the struggles of the wife's heart with the mother's would have been especially striking on the stage, and I only regret that the development of such a plot should not have been either reserved for tragedy, or elaborated into a prolonged and regular work of fiction. Mrs. Hall evinces in this, as in 'The Buccaneer,' very marked talents for the stage, and if she would devote her time and skill to a village tragedy, that should contain the simplicity and power of Grace Huntly, I feel confident that it would have a startling success. Very few writers of the day—male or female—equal this accomplished woman, in the power of touching the heart by pathetic, or exalting it by

generous, emotions.—But to turn to politics. What do you think of the Westminster business? Awkward enough. Who is to blame?”

A——. “Nay, let me have your opinion. I am too recently returned—from—ehem—I mean—to London, to be *au fait* at these political matters.”

M——. “Why, then, the affair seems to me to stand thus :—I cannot admit with some of the papers, that electors owe no gratitude to a faithful representative : that if he, on the one hand, has acted with honesty and talent in Parliament, they, on the other hand, bestowed on him the opportunity so to act. I hold such a doctrine to be base and fallacious. The obligations which a wise and good legislator confers on the world—the abuses he rectifies—the reforms he supports—the sacrifice of youth—of health—of pleasure—of time to the service of mankind, are not repaid—no, not in a thousandth part—by the mere honour of a seat in Parliament, however large the constituency and important the trust. It is exactly as unjust and as mean in electors to think there can be no gratitude due to the man they elect, because they have elected him, as it would be in a master to deem that he owes nothing to the steward who has protected his property against robbers, economized his income, or established order in his house. What should we think of the master who said, ‘I owe this man nothing, for he could never have thus served me if I had not made him my servant?’ What logic and what gratitude! Precisely of the same nature are the logic and the gratitude of those who, admitting that Hobhouse has served his constituents as electors and citizens, yet contend that they owe him nothing for the service. You see that, taking this view of one part of the question, I am not likely to be biassed against Hobhouse’s claims; but, supposing the electors come to Sir John and say, ‘Such and such opinions you advocated out of office, will you originate or support them now you are in?’ And supposing Sir John declares he will not answer that question—that the content of his constituents is to him a matter of perfect indifference—and dismisses the deputation with a *brusque* resentment at their merely asking him if his opinions are unchanged, and he will some time or other put those opinions into action, and supposing too that while *now* declaring against pledges, he is known formerly to have advocated—

may—to have insisted upon pledges in these memorable words, ‘To any definite questions, I shall think myself bound to give a sincere answer; for it appears to my judgment that the clamour raised against what is called demanding a pledge, has no foundation in theory or practice,’—then who can doubt that Hobhouse is in the wrong, and the electors in the right. In vain then would the sophists of the Treasury on the one hand, or of the Peel bench on the other, assert that he is to be turned out because he is in office. He is not to be turned out because he has come into power, but because he has gone out of his opinions. In vain is it to say that he is turned out for not giving pledges—he is turned out because one year he calls himself bound to give pledges, another year bound not even to answer questions. In vain, also, is it to say a Ministry cannot get on, if a Minister is not to sacrifice his individual opinions to the concord of the whole. A Minister of Sir John Hobhouse’s rank, talents, eloquence, and character (placed as he is much too low for his claims, he ought at least to have been in the Cabinet), should only have accepted office on the understanding that he was to be allowed to be consistent—that he was to carry into effect the measures he had declared necessary to the welfare of the country. If he did not do this, the electors of Westminster were right to be discontented: if he did, he ought to have been glad to seize the opportunity to declare the new facilities for good of which he had so nobly possessed himself. And here I cannot sufficiently blame that part of Colonel Evans’s letter which makes office itself a fault in a member for Westminster. Are the representatives of the smallest constituencies alone to be in power? or is a man less useful because he is in a position to put his opinions into effect. This doctrine is not worthy so enlightened a man as Colonel Evans.

“I have a very warm admiration of Hobhouse in many respects, but I think he has evidently committed a mistake at the least. He committed a mistake either in taking office with his hands tied, or in refusing to avow that he retained in office his former opinions—an avowal due to his character.* Upon the whole, there is something salutary

* But considering Sir John Hobhouse’s great talents and long services—we think every possible facility ought to be given him for explanation. We wish we could say that we are satisfied with his speech of last Monday, but we are not—it is as vague as it is eloquent! We ourselves are among the

in the business, however it turn out. It is salutary that a constituency should be doubly jealous of representatives in office—that it should tie them to their old politics. This, if generally acted upon, would, in the first place, make men more moderate in their alleged opinions, and more cautious how they attack a Government for offences they themselves may commit. In the second place, it would make the remedy of abuses more expeditious—those who come into office would be no longer divided about this measure or that. Able men could only join a Government on the understanding that able measures are to be adopted; and talent will thus be measured by its utilities. As regards Colonel Evans, no one, on reflection, can fairly consider *him* to blame. He had not even the ties of party with Sir John Hobhouse or with the Ministry; he has never associated himself with the Whigs; he has been done scant justice to by the Government. One of the best officers in Europe, he has not had promotion because he has not been a Lord's son. He is perfectly free from all obligations to all parties; and stands alone, with his gallant reputation—his manly character—his enterprising disposition—and his sturdy understanding for his sole friends. The cry that a Reformer should not oppose a Reformer will come with an ill grace from Ministers, when Colonel Maberly, an official, is opposed to Mr. Perry, a young and able Reformer, highly distinguished by his efforts against the taxes on knowledge, and when the Premier's own son, Colonel Grey, was sent

constituency of Westminster—we have a sincere personal regard for Colonel Evans—and scarce any acquaintance with Sir John Hobhouse—but we should think ourselves bound to give Hobhouse our vote in preference to any other candidate, if he would but say publicly that he not only retains the opinions he once professed, but will labour with equal zeal to bring them into effect. If he will not say this, he *leaves the Electors of Westminster no option*. The liberalism which is the ladder to self-interests is the most dangerous of all hypocrisies. Sir John Hobhouse says he relies on the plain dealing of the Electors,—we give him our vote according as he shew as plain-dealing himself.

[Sir John Cam Hobhouse, (Byron's friend) afterwards Lord Broughton, was returned at the general election in December, 1832, as the colleague of Sir Francis Burdett in the representation of the City of Westminster—Colonel (afterwards General Sir) Delacy Evans being the defeated rival liberal candidate. Sir John Hobhouse having early in the ensuing year accepted the Chiltern Hundreds, a new writ was issued in the May of 1833, when, after a sharp contest, Colonel DeLacy Evans was returned by 2027 votes, in opposition to Sir John Hobhouse who obtained only 1835, while 738 were accorded by the conservative electors to his associate in misfortune, Mr. Bickham Escott.]

down last session to Wycombe to oppose Mr. Disraeli, already in the field; and who, by his printed addresses, pledged himself to triennial parliaments, vote by ballot, and the abolition of taxes on knowledge. The friends of Colonel Grey (he himself of course could not have sanctioned the hypocrisy) endeavoured to excuse themselves by calling Mr. Disraeli, in the face of all his printed and pledged annunciations, a Tory, solely because his father was one, and because his father's friends supported him upon private or local grounds (Mr. Disraeli living in the county).* Nothing could be more unhandsome than this charge; and the brilliant author of 'Contarini Fleming' aptly avenged himself on some placard styling him a Tory in disguise, by asserting 'that the only Tory in disguise was a Whig in office!' The Ministry thought themselves entitled to be angry with public men—(equally accredited with themselves for unflinching liberality of opinion)—for giving, previous to Colonel Grey's declaring himself, recommendatory letters to this able and plain-speaking candidate. Certainly such a recommendation would not have been given against the son of Lord Grey—a man to whom the country is so largely indebted—had Colonel Grey *then* been in the field; but to inculcate the doctrine that no Reformer is to oppose a Reformer, and then to oppose and to calumniate a very distinguished and avowed Reformer, solely because he is not one of the Aristocratic Whig *clique*, is a little too bad! With this example of Reformer opposing Reformer, the Ministers must beware how they throw stones."

A——. "Very true—and now let us take a ride."

* But some old opinions (now publicly renounced) in works written by Mr. Disraeli, when a mere boy, may be another cause of accusation? Hardly so we imagine with Lord Palmerston on the same bench as the accuser.

No. IX.

The non-necessity of a termination to these Papers—The Expediency of writing one's own Life—A Dinner at a Wit's—The Character of a Man à-la-mode—The Nine-pin Parliament—Gully and Cobbett—Electioneering Anecdotes—Don Telesforo de Trueba's new Comedy—Incivility progresses with Civilization—Monck Mason—Plutarch's Musical Instruments—Story of the Three Bailiffs—Walk through London at night—An Adventure—Love and its Disadvantages.

SHALL I ever finish these papers? I intended to conclude them with the new year; but wherefore?—they suit one month as well as another—their subjects always vary—nothing can be more dissimilar than two several numbers of the series,—touching on all subjects, exhausting none. These papers fulfil for the "New Monthly" the same object as the "Noctes" fulfil for "Blackwood's;" and like the "Noctes," therefore, may be continued while the world continues to furnish matter for criticism and comment.

How many adventures are yet left for me! Thank heaven, I am always getting into some scrape or another; and even when I do seize an interval of leisure, and become orderly, I am only engaged in writing a history of the pranks I have played. Recent biographies have taught me the necessity of one thing—I shall write my own biography myself! I do not intend to be made into four volumes, price 2*l.* 2*s.*, with "about this time we may suppose," and "at this event let us pause to imagine his emotions." No! I shall tell my own plain story in my own best plain way. And never, I will venture to say, has any literary man had a more strange and various life than I have! Happily, too, it is not over yet; the best part is, I hope to come. Patience, and shuffle the cards.

A dinner at Greville's! that is really a treat. There I shall learn all the gossip of the day. Asmodeus—

"At your service."

"Ah, my dear Devil, it is an age since I saw you! What have you been about?"

"Playing the devil at elections."

"Excellent! Have you been standing yourself, or merely exerting your vocation as an agent?"

"Why, as I like making mischief, I went down to a large town in my proper character."

"What! as a devil?"

"No! as a Conservative. It is to the interest of the Infernals to keep things in this world exactly as they are. We could not be better off. Accordingly they have made a subscription to get as many of us in as possible; and I received three thousand pounds from our Committee in Charles Street, in order to contest the borough of ——."

"Well, and ——"

"No sooner did I appear at the balcony than they began to stone me. I leave that fate for your martyrs (stones don't agree with us), and I retired into the dining-room to harangue my committee. Meanwhile the riot thickened—windows crashed—bones smashed—beer flowed, and I sent out half-a-dozen agents to bribe the waverers. In a word, I kept the town for three days in a most diabolical state, and retired handsomely on the day of nomination, with some dozen or two of drunken souls booked for out voters in the general election below. I served myself better than I did my employers of Charles Street. But where are you going? I see you are dressed—for conquest?"

"Oh, I am going to dine with Greville, a man whom, in all probability, you will know better one of these days. Suppose you accompany me incog.?—his parties are agreeable enough."

The Devil consented, and I drove him to Greville's in my cabriolet. He made himself invisible during dinner, and he performed the same charm with a couple of bottles of champagne—the imp loves his glass.

Greville is one of those men who make it *a point* to live in May Fair. He is so very much the *ton*, that he is a little *mauvais ton*. His horses are *too* handsome—his liveries *too* plain—and his cook *too* good. His imagination is above the level of that mediocre faculty—*Taste*; and he always wishes to play the *ideal* of the fine gentleman, rather than the reality. He is witty—learned—versatile—and luxurious. He was made for a Frenchman, and has lived half his life in Paris—his age is thirty-five—his eyes dark—his voice soft—and his linen and teeth the whitest things in the world.

We sat down to dinner to the number of four; all, except myself, fresh from electioneering; all once more M.P.'d into the prospective dignity of franking.

1st Diner out. "Famous Parliament!—the last blow to

the Tories, and the first to the Destructives! — all Whigs."

2d Diner out. "Yes, the Nine-pin Parliament—an immense *juste milieu*, and two little extremes."

Greville. "My friend Gully returned! * L—— says with a mock gravity that he will be a very dangerous reasoner—for his arguments will be so-*fist*-ical!"

Myself, alias A. "To such an extreme, I fear, as to be given absolutely to fibbing."

2d Diner out. "I hear he is quite an Utilitarian, and much addicted to *Mill*."

A——. "Then he must have ratted; for in his earlier life he was famous for his propensity to *Peel*."

2d Diner out. "There is Cobbett, too, training himself

'To tread with sturdy steps the *mountain's* brow.'

How the deuce — (Greville, some wine—Chablis, if you please)—how the deuce is he to bear our hours.† The old fellow swears in his Register, that he goes to bed at eight, and that is the reason he's so hearty; faith, we shall kill him by the end of the first week—the *stroke* of twelve will be his death-*blow*."

Greville. "His maiden motion is to be, 'That Burdett's property be confiscated to the payment of the National Debt.'"

1st Diner out. "He will be insatiably long—he thinks nothing of three hours—and he is especially anxious to eclipse Brougham's celebrated prolixity on Law Reforms."

Greville. "Jealousy and vanity are his two great characteristics; he will wish to outshine O'Connell, and he'll die of rage at his failure."

* [John Gully, sometime famous as a prize-fighter, was returned without opposition at the General Election of December, 1832, as M.P. for the Borough of Pontefract, in Yorkshire, having, as his colleague in the representation, the Hon. Henry Jerminham. At the next General Election, that of January, 1835, the ex-prize-fighter, Mr. Gully, was returned at the head of the poll, having as his colleague that time the conservative Viscount Pollington.]

† [William Cobbett in fact did not long survive his return to the House of Commons. Having first obtained his seat as member for Oldham, in Lancashire, in the December of 1832, as the colleague of John Fielden, those two members were re-elected without any contest in the January of 1835, Cobbett dying barely six months afterwards, on the 18th of June, his hitherto hale and hearty constitution having been undermined by the late hours of Parliament].

1st Diner out. "But the best of all is my friend——. I met him on the road to his borough, with a travelling equipage of two bull-dogs, two boxers, a military friend, and a brace of pistols. 'I like to be prepared,' said ——, twirling his mustachios, 'in case people behave unhand-somely!'"

All. "Ha, ha—so like——"

A——. "What sort of a thing is Trueba's comedy?"

Greville. "Very good, on the whole; sharp—smart—Spanish,—with a true enough perception of the comic, and a dash of philosophy about it. He's a clever fellow that Trueba, if he would not write so much."

A——. "His fecundity reminds me of what Hazlitt says of Lope de Vega. 'What impertinence to boast of writing a comedy before breakfast—he had plenty of time to do it after!'"

1st Diner out. "Very good! Who said that? Haz—Haz—"

A——. "Hazlitt."

1st Diner out. "Who? Hazlitt—I never heard of him! Is he in society?"

A——. "Not in your set, I fancy."

2d Diner out. "Oh, one of your authors—eh!"

1st Diner out. "Authors! nay, I know all the best of them—by title at least."

A——. "Do you? let's hear them—count away."

1st Diner out (on his fingers). "Byron—Scott—Southey—Moore,—and—and—ay—Campbell; that's all."

Greville (humming a tune).

" 'Who is wise—is wise—is wise,
Studies books in reading men.' "

"Take some hock, *A——*, and don't puzzle my friend here, who, I can assure you, is so fond of the belles lettres, that when we were at Eton together he inscribed his gun with the old motto—

' Delightful task
To teach the young idea how to shoot! '"

A——. "Yes; and he wrote 'Styx' on his sword-cane—meaning to express, in one word, that it was letiferous."

1st Diner out (evidently pleased). "Psha! let me recommend this *Matelotte*.—How is William Brougham?"

Greville. "Recovering fast, to the despair of six unsuc-

cessful candidates, who, at the report of his death, all started for London, in the hope of Southwark. I am heartily glad of it; for he is a capital fellow—very amiable, and very clever.”

A——. “You recollect K——? Well, he sent a courier on to the borough of——, saying, he understood there were two gentlemen standing for it unwilling to pledge themselves. He begged to announce that a gentleman was coming, in his carriage and four, willing to pledge himself to anything.”

Greville. “Ha! ha! — that’s excellent. Apropos of pledges. Young —— calls them ‘*infernal things*.’”

1st Diner out. “Why, I thought he was a desperate Radical.”

Greville. “Yes; but he says that even the staunchest Radical *must* think pledges——*damn-a-tory!*”

1st Diner out. “So Lord Abercorn has taken Chesterfield House. What a succession of pretty faces!—Lady Abercorn after Lady Chesterfield. How the great Lord—Philip Dormer—would bow and smile, if he were alive!”

Greville. “What’s the reason, A——, since you’re a philosopher, that the more civilized we grow, the more uncivil we become? Witness France and England: in both, the ‘Old School’ signifies everything polished, and the ‘New School’ everything rude.”

A——. “I suppose because Courts form manners—and as we grow wiser, Courts grow out of fashion. Thus, by degrees, Kings themselves unconsciously follow, instead of setting, the popular mode: and Louis Philippe and William the Fourth value themselves on their bourgeois simplicity, because bourgeois simplicity is a means to be popular. So much for Reason,—now for Song. Who’s to have the Opera this year? Now Monck Mason is gone, I intend to afford myself a box.”

Greville. “Ah, the poor Monck!—he is now going to make a Monastery of the Pantheon. Certainly, Monck was a good type of a musical instrument,—devilish hollow—and formed to make a noise.”

A——. “Like all musicians in that respect, who are usually the most inane of God’s creatures! Our friend there, who knows all the Authors by heart, will tell you that Plutarch said the best instruments in his time were made out of the jaw-bones of asses.”

Greville. "Ha! ha!—not bad that!"

A——. "Plutarch is obliged to you."

1st Diner out. "So G—— has gone on the Continent. He says there are no waters like those of Aix-la-Chapelle to rid him of his hereditary complaint."

Greville. "What's that?"

1st Diner out. "Duns!"

A——. "Ha! ha! Yes, it is very true,—it is hereditary; his father was more afflicted than himself. Apropos of that; did you ever hear how Old G—— served the three bailiffs?"

Greville. "No;—let's have it."

A——. "Well; G—— had retired to a quiet watering-place, after innumerable and most narrow escapes,—where he proposed to enjoy himself under a feigned name—and a red wig. Unhappily, however, he was tracked—trapped—and arrested by three sturdy fellows in his own house. The fertile genius of G—— was not dismayed. With his habitual politeness, he begged the bailiffs to be seated, placed a large round of beef and two or three bottles of wine before them, and entreated permission to write to a friend a few miles off, and await the answer, previous to his departure for the 'Debtors' side.' The bailiffs, pleased with the beef and wine, consented. G—— wrote a note to a captain of a vessel, who only waited a favourable wind to set sail, and who had found much difficulty in pressing sufficient seamen. At that time impressment was carried on with the most rigorous severity.

"As soon as the Captain arrived,—which he did with half a score of tall fellows at his heels,—G——, pointing to the bailiffs, who were still making merry, exclaims—'Ah, my dear friend, these are the three persons I mentioned in my note, — just the thing for your vessel. Observe how strong they are;—did you ever see men more stoutly built? Take them, my good friend; nay, no thanks—I make you a present of them.' The Captain, *enchanté de son cadeau*, ordered his escort instantly to seize the astonished bailiffs; and, despite their struggles and protestations, they were hurried away, and shipped off next day to the East Indies."

Greville. "Ha! ha! ha!—A New Way, indeed, to pay Old Debts!"

* * * * *

"Oh! Asmodeus," said I, as I walked forth from Greville's, arm-and-arm with the Devil, "what a beautiful night! Who shall say that a great city hath not as much poetry as the solitudes of fields and streams? The silence of these mighty marts of industry and pleasure—the mystery that hangs over every house, thus still and impenetrable—a record, and often a romance, in each—the muffled shapes stealing across from time to time; and if, wandering from these statelier quarters, you touch near upon the more squalid abodes of men—the stir—the hubbub—the wild mirth of desperate hearts—the dark and dread interest that belongs to crime. Then, anon, in some high chamber, you see a solitary light—waning not, nor blinking, through the gloom. How often have I paused to gaze on such a light, and busy myself with conjecture! Does it shine over the deep delight of study—the open volume and the worn brow—the young ambition of Knowledge—that false friend which nurseth in her bosom disease and early death? Does it wake beside the vigil of some woman heart, beating for the approach of a guilty leman—or waiting, in chillness and in dread, the slow and heavy step of one returning from the reeking haunts of the gamester—her wedded mate, perhaps her early love? Is there not more poetry in this than in wastes, pregnant only with the dull animal life? What have the woods and waters equal to the romance of the human heart? And here, too, Asmodeus, what scope for enterprise—that life of life! What variety—what incident! Verily, the knight-errant of old knew not half the adventures that may befall a man, young, bold, and gallant, in a great city. Is it not so, Asmodeus? You are the demon of intrigue—I appeal to you!"

"Why, I must own you speak truth. But if so fond of adventure, why not seek it? Do you observe that door ajar—there yonder, in that street opening to our right; and do you not note something of a white drapery, just visible at the aperture? There is an adventure for you!"

"Thanks. I obey the hint. Wait here my return."

Warmed with wine, and my spirits heightened by the bracing air of the night, I was indeed ripe for any adventure: so gliding rapidly into the street which Asmodeus indicated, I arrived at the half-open door. It was one of those moderately-sized houses which characterize the smaller streets of Mayfair. The lamp burnt opposite, bright and

steady: the apparition of the white drapery was gone. Trusting to my lucky stars, I stole lightly up the steps, and entered the passage. All was gloom and shadow.

"Is that you?" murmured a voice in the dark.

"It is myself, and no other," said I, in a breathless whisper.

"Follow me, then," answered the voice; and the door was softly shut.

"I am in for it," thought I: "so much the better." My hand was gently seized by fingers so soft and delicate that I felt a very strange sensation tingling up to my shoulder-bone—perhaps it did not stop there. I followed my conductor, who glided on with a light step, and we soon began to ascend the stairs. We passed the first landing-place. "I hope to heaven," thought I, "the lady is not a housemaid. I have a horror of the servile. But her hand—no! this hand is not made for mops!" We halted at the second floor. My conductress opened a door, and, and—shall I break off here?—I have a great mind—no! I'll go on. Well then, reader, I found myself in a room—not alone—ah! not alone with my guide—but with three other damsels, all sitting round a table, and all under twenty. A pair of wax candles illumed the apartment, which was a well-furnished, but not gaudy, dressing-room. I looked round, and bowed with a most courtly gravity. The ladies uttered a little scream.

"Anne! Anne! who have you brought here?"

Anne stood thunderstruck—gazing at me as if I was the red man in "Der Freischutz." I, in my turn, gazed at her. She was apparently about five and twenty—quietly, but well dressed—of a small and delicate shape, with a face slightly marked with the small-pox. But such a pair of black eyes!—and those eyes very soon began to dart fire!

"Who are you, Sir?—How dare you?"

"Nay, nay—pray no scolding. Is it my fault, fair Anne, that I am here? You see I can do you no mischief. There are four of you; and what is one odd fish among so many?"

"Sir!"

"Sir!"

"This is too bad!"

"I'll raise the house!"

"Get out!"

"Go along with you!"

"What do you take us for?"

"Pardon me, that is exactly the question I was going to ask you!—What did you take *me* for?"

"Did Mr. Gabriel tell you—" began my guide, who on looking at me twice, and seeing I was under thirty, and not dressed like a house-breaker (for it is only your swindlers who are great dandies, and go by the name of Ferdinand Augustus) began a little to relent from her first rage;—

"Gabriel, Gabriel,—oh, my guardian angel!" thought I—for, as by intuition, I suddenly guessed at the origin of the whole proceeding. "Yes," said I aloud, "Mr. Gabriel *did* tell me that you wished to have your fortunes told, and being engaged himself, he sent me as the ablest of his pupils to supply his place. Oh, Mr. Gabriel is a great man; ladies, pray be seated—a pen and ink if you please—what hour were you born, ma'am?—allow me to take this chair."

Now the reader probably knows that Gabriel is a celebrated fortune-teller, in great request at the west end of the town; he has been consulted at all times and by all persons—I myself have had my fortune told by him—and he gave me seven children, for which I thank him, as I ought! In fact he is a friend of mine, and of yours too, dear reader—if you pay him his fees.

Now the damsels looked at each other, a smile broke over the face of Anne; it spread like contagion—nay, it broke out into a giggle—in a few minutes we became excellent friends. Luckily I knew a little of the mysteries of soothsaying—chiromancy is one of my strong points, and as to nativities, what did Gabriel promise me seven children for if I was not to know something about casting a birth?

We became excellent friends—the girls were young, merry, innocent, and, there being four of them, fearless. I counted the lines in their hands—made all sorts of odd figures out of Euclid, and by the help of the Asses' Bridge, I foretold Anne a Lord's elder son. They produced a bottle of sherry and some cakes; oh, how happy we were, how talkative—how gay! I blessed my stars and Asmodeus, and stayed there till one o'clock. I found that three of the young ladies were the daughters of the Oikodespotes, the master of the house, and after some sifting I learnt his name; I recognized it (for one can't live in London without knowing a little about every one) as that of a man of respectable parentage, who had married an actress early in

life, and become involved in difficulties; he could not work or beg, but he could live upon his wits—he gambled—won—entered as a dormant partner in a celebrated gaming-house, and made a decent competency without much public disgrace. His wife had been long dead. She had left him three daughters; I had often heard of their personal attractions, but he had kept them tolerably well immured from temptation. I now saw them; yes, as I said before, they were gay, but as yet innocent; the imperfect education they had received, the want of all maternal care, and the example of no very decorous parentage, made them eager for amusement and adventure; just the persons to make an appointment with old Gabriel, and to forgive the error which introduced a young astrologer in his stead. But, the fourth maiden! now, now, I come to her. Fancy, then, a girl of about seventeen, with a face younger, a form maturer, than her years; her hair dark, soft, silky, and arranged like a Christian's, viz. not in those irredeemable ringlets which trail down like a banyan tree, but parted, with two slight curls on either temple—her forehead white and transparent, straight eyebrows, long lashes, with eyes of a real blue,—not that cold grey which passes off for blue with the undiscerning, but rich, radiant, deep as Raphael himself, in his purest dream of colour, would have made them—an indifferent nose (I for my own part am contented with a secondary order of nose in a woman—the best are too severe)—piquant, and well set—a mouth, so fresh and young, that you might fancy it like that of hers in the fairy tale, from which dropped flowers in their tenderest bloom—teeth small, white; and slightly parted each from the other—a peculiarity not against my taste, though the physiognomists call it deceitful—beautiful hands—a satin skin—a dimple—and a laugh like silver. Such is the picture of Julia L., and I am over head and ears in love with her. She talked little, and when she did speak looked away shyly, and laughed prettily, colouring all the while. This was very intoxicating—I blessed the Devil for the good thing he had put me up to, and when Anne conducted me down stairs, as the clock struck one, and they promised to admit me when I called the next day, I thought my first youth had returned to me, and I was once more eighteen. Ah! happy age! What hopes then were mine, and what a heart! Can I love another again? Certainly

not. Very well. Then I can see Julia with perfect safety.

Asmodeus was with me at breakfast the next morning; I shook him cordially by the hand;—nay, I all but embraced him. He grinned his most withering grin at my transports.

“Moderate yourself, my dear friend,” said the Demon, “what are you about to do—are you going to plunge into this *amour* or not?”

“*Amour*!—plunge!—bah!—I am going to see Julia.”

“I wash my hand of the consequences,” said Asmodeus.

“Do you foresee them, then?”

“That is a question I may not answer;—but does not every creature, with a grain of common sense, see how such follies invariably end?—Well, well—recollect the old fable of the pot of clay and the pot of gold going down the stream—the pot of clay is so proud of its friend, and the first moment the tide brings them fairly together, it is broken to pieces!”

“What rhodomontade is this, Asmodeus?—what have pots of gold and clay to do with me and Julia?”

“All women in love resemble the pots of clay—*voilà tout*.”

The warning tone of the Demon made some impression on me, but it soon wore off. I repaired to the house—was admitted—and saw Julia once more; she is even lovelier by day than at night, her complexion is so fresh and pure;—youth clings round her like a garment of light, and its robe is yet all sparkling with the dews of childhood. I wish she would talk more—her silence oppresses me with the weight of my own emotions; yet her eyes are less prudent than her lips, and we converse very agreeably by their help. So, then, I am in love—fairly in love. I have long had a presentiment that that pleasant accident was about to happen; nay, I told the Devil so, and he would not believe me. I think, upon the whole, I bear the event with becoming fortitude; and, after all, it has its evils; all other enjoyments become trite beside it;—play ceases to intoxicate—wine hath lost its sparkle—companionship wearies—one grows very dull at one’s club. Love need well have its charms to recompense us for all the pleasures it spoils; and I have not yet got to the most delicious part of the history—correspondence! When one begins to receive

letters, a new existence fills one—there is an ether in one's veins. What sweet triumph to extort those expressions from the pen, which afterwards *must* be ratified with the lip, however bashful it be; with what new objects the day is filled; what a new excitement attaches itself to time!—"In two hours hence I shall hear from her!"—with what expectation—what hope—what fear—what palpitating nerves—one lives till then! But, alas! how do all these ecstasies end?—in woe, if the suit be not successful—in satiety, if it is. No doubt this extreme love is a false calculation. I agree with Mr. Mill, "we ought to be brought up differently." But as, unhappily, I was educated in the old system, I fear I cannot mend myself, so I must be very careful with my children. They shall be trained up to a proper economy of the passions, and shall never get in love, without knowing exactly what it will cost them!—Meanwhile I shall take these geraniums to Julia. Reader, farewell, and long for next month, that you may know more.

No. X.

PART FIRST CONCLUDED.

Passion—its History and its Termination.

My adventures now become of a more grave and earnest character than they have been wont to be. The reader must be prepared to confine his interest solely to sublunary sources—the supernatural has vanished from my life—unless indeed, as at times I believe, nothing is so marvellous or so alien to our earthly and common nature as the spirit that animates and transforms us when we love.

It was evening, clear and frosty—I stood in one of the small deserted streets that intersect Mayfair, waiting for Julia. Yes! our attachment had now progressed to that point; we met—alone and in secret. From the hour Julia first consented to these interviews, Asmodeus left me: I have not seen him since.

"My gratitude stops here," said he. "It was my task to amuse, to interest you, but no more. I deal not with the passions—I can do nothing for you in this affair. You are in love, and in the hands of a stronger demon than myself. Adieu!—when the spell is broken we may meet again."

With those words he vanished, and has I suspect engaged his services for the present to the Marquis of Hertford.

I was waiting then, in this lonely street, for the coming of Julia; I heard the clock strike eight, the appointed hour, but I saw not her dark mantle and graceful form emerging from the cross street which led her to our *rendezvous*. And who was Julia, and what? She was a relation of the gaming adventurer at whose house and with whose daughter I had first seen her—and she lived at somewhat a distant part of the town with a sister who was a widow and much older than herself. Occupied in the business of an extensive trade, and the cares of a growing family, this sister left Julia to the guidance of her own susceptible fancy and youthful inexperience—left her to reflect—to imagine—to act as she would, and the consequence was that she fell in love. She was thoroughly guileless, and almost thoroughly ignorant. She could read indeed, but only novels, and those not of the gravest; she could write—but in no fluent hand, and if her heart taught her the sentiment that supplies skill, her diffidence forbade her to express it. She was quiet, melancholy, yet quickly moved to mirth—sensitive, and yet pure. I afterwards discovered that pride was her prevailing characteristic, but at first it lay concealed. I already loved her even for her deficiencies, for they were not of Nature but of Education.

And who and what is her lover? Long as I have been relating these adventures, I have not yet communicated that secret. Writing about myself, I have not yet disclosed myself. I will now do so:—I am then an idle, wandering, unmarried man—rich, well-born, still young—who has read much, written somewhat, and lived for pleasure, action, and the Hour—keeping thought for study, but excluding it from enterprise, and ready to plunge into any plan or any pursuit, so that it promised the excitement of something new. Such a life engenders more of remembrance than of hope; it flings our dreams back upon the past, instead of urging them to the future—it gives us excitement in retrospection, but satiety when we turn towards the years to come; the pleasure of youth is a costly draught, in which the pearl that should enrich our manhood is dissolved. And so much for Julia's lover; the best thing in his favour is that she loves him. The half hour has passed—will she come? How my heart beats?—the night is clear and

bright, what can have delayed her? I hear feet—Ah Julia, it is you indeed!”

Julia took my arm, and pressed it silently; I drew aside her veil, and beneath the lamp, looked into her face; she was weeping.

“And what is the matter, dearest?”

“My sister has discovered your last letter to me; I dropped it, and—and——”

“Heavens! how could you be so imprudent—but I hope it is no matter—what does your sister say?”

“That—that I ought to see you no more.”

“She is kind; but you will not obey her, my Julia?”

“I cannot help it.”

“Why, surely you can come out when you like?”

“No; I have promised not. She has been a kind sister to me, sir, and—and she spoke so kindly now on this matter, that I could not help promising; and I cannot break my promise, though I may break my heart.”

“Is there no way of compromising the matter?” said I, after a pause. “No way of seeing me? My Julia, you will not desert me now?”

“But what can I do?” said Julia, simply.

“My angel, surely the promise was not willingly given; it was extorted from you!”

“No, sir: I gave it with all my heart.”

“I thank you.”

“Pray, pray do not speak so coldly; you must, you must own it was very wrong in me ever to see you; and how could this end—God knows, but not to my good and my family’s honour. I never thought much about it before, and went on, and on, till I got entangled, and did not dare look much back or much forward; but now you see, when my sister began to show me all the folly I have committed, I was frightened, and—and—in short, it is no use talking, I can meet you no more.”

“But I shall at least see you at your relation’s, the Miss ****?”

“No, sir; I have promised also not to go there, and not to go anywhere without my sister.”

“Confound your sister,” I muttered with a most conscientious heartiness; “you give me up then,” said I, aloud, “without a sigh, and without a struggle?”

Julia wept on without answering; my heart softened to

her, and my conscience smote myself. Was not the sister right? Had I not been selfishly reckless of consequences? Was it not now my duty to be generous? "And even if generous," answered Passion, "will Julia be happy? Have not matters already gone so far that her heart is implicated without recall? To leave her, is to leave her to be wretched." We walked quietly on, neither speaking. Never before had I felt how dearly I loved this innocent and charming girl; and loving her so dearly, a feeling for *her* began to preponderate over the angry and bitter mortification I had first experienced for myself. My mind was confused and bewildered—I knew not which course to pursue. We had gone on thus mute for several minutes, when at the corner of a street which led her homewards, Julia turned, and said in a faltering voice,—“Farewell, sir, God bless you—let us part here; I must go home now!” The street was utterly empty—the lamps few, and at long intervals, left the place where we stood in shade. I saw her countenance only imperfectly through the low long bonnet which modestly, as it were, shrouded its tearful loveliness; I drew my arm round her, kissed her lips, and said, “Be it as you think best for yourself—go and be happy—think no more of me.”

Julia paused—hesitated, as about to speak—then shook her head gently, and, still silent (as if the voice were choked within) lowered her veil, and walked away. When she had got a few paces, she turned back, and seeing that I still stood in the same spot, gazing upon her, her courage seemed to desert her; she returned, placed her hand in mine, and said in a soft whisper,

“You are not angry with me—you will not hate me?”

“Julia, to the last hour of my life I shall adore you; that I do not reproach you—that I do not tamper with your determination, is the greatest proof of the real and deep love I bear to you; but go—go—or I shall not be so generous long.”

Now Julia was quite a child in mind more than years, and her impulses were childlike, and after a little pause, and a little evident embarrassment, she drew from her finger a pretty though plain ring, that I had once admired, and she said very timidly,

“If, sir, you will condescend to accept this——”

I heard no more; I vow that my heart melted within me

at once, and the tears ran down my cheek almost as fast as they did down Julia's; the incident was so simple—the sentiment it veiled was so touching and so youthful. I took the ring and kissed it—Julia yet lingered—I saw what was at her heart, though she dared not say it. She wished also for some little remembrance of the link that had been between us, but she would not take the chain I pressed upon her; it was too costly; and the only gift that pleased her, and she at last accepted, was a ring not half the value even of her own. This little interchange, and the more gentle and less passionate feelings to which it gave birth, seemed to console her; and when she left me, it was with a steadier step and a less drooping air. Poor Julia! I stayed in that desolate spot till the last glimpse of thy light form vanished from my gaze.

In the whole course of life there is no passage in it so "weary, stale, and unprofitable," as that which follows some episode of Passion broken abruptly off. Still loving, yet forbid the object we love, the heart sinks beneath the weight of its own craving affections. There is no event to the day—a burthensome listlessness—a weary and distasteful apathy fill up the dull flatness of the hours.—Time creeps before us visibly—we see his hour-glass and his scythe,—and we lose all the charm of Life the moment we are made sensible of its presence!

I resolved to travel—I fixed the day of my departure. Would to heaven that I had been permitted to carry, at least, that purpose into effect! About three days before the one I had appointed for leaving London, I met suddenly in the street my friend Anne, the eldest of the damsels to whom I had played the sorcerer. She knew, of course, of my love for Julia, and had assisted in our interviews. I found that she now knew of our separation. She had called upon Julia, and the sister had told her all, and remonstrated with her for her connivance at our attachment. The girl described the present condition of Julia in the most melancholy colours. She said she passed the day alone—and (the widow had confessed) for the most part in tears—that she had already lost her colour and roundness of form—that her health was breaking beneath an effort which her imperfect education feeding her imagination at the expense of the reasoning faculty, and furnishing her with no resources, so ill prepared her to

sustain. And with her sister, however well meaning, she had no sympathy. She found in her no support, and but seldom even companionship.

This account produced a great revulsion in my mind. Hitherto I had at least consoled myself with the belief that I had acted in the true spirit of tenderness to Julia, and in that hope I had supported myself. Now all thought, prudence, virtue vanished beneath the idea of her unhappiness. I returned home, and in the impulse of the moment wrote to her a passionate, an imploring letter. I besought her to fly with me. I committed the letter to my servant, a foreigner, well-used to such commissions; and in a state of breathless fever I awaited the reply. It came—the address was in Julia's writing. I opened it with a sort of transport—my own letter was returned unopened—the cover contained these few words:—

"I have pledged myself to return your letters in case you should write to me, and so I keep my word. I dare not—dare not open this; for I cannot tell you what it costs me to keep my resolution. I had no idea that it would be so impossible to forget you—that I should be so unhappy. But though I will not trust myself to read what you have written, I know well how full of kindness every word is, and feel as if I *had* read the letter; and it makes me wickedly happy to think you have not *yet* forgotten me, though you soon must. Pray do not write to me again—I beseech you not, as you value the little peace that is left to me. And so, sir, no more from Julia, who prays for you night and day, and will think of you as long as she lives."

What was I to do after the receipt of this letter? So artless was Julia, that every word that ought to have dissuaded me from molesting her more, seemed to make it imperative to refrain. And what a corroboration in these lines of all I had been told! I waited till dark. I repaired with my servant to that part of the town in which Julia's sister resided. I reconnoitred the house. "And how," asked I, for the first time of my servant, "how, Louis, did you convey the letter?"

"I went, sir, first," answered Louis, "to the young lady, Miss Julia's cousin, in — street, and asked if I could not carry any parcel to her relation. She understood me, and gave me one. I slipped the letter into the parcel, and calling at the private entrance of the house desired the

maid who opened the door to give it only to Miss Julia. I made sure of the servant with half-a-guinea. Miss Julia herself came down, and gave me the answer."

"Ha, and you saw her then?"

"Not her face, sir, for she had put on her bonnet, and she did not detain me a moment."

In this account there was no clue to the apartment which belonged to Julia, and that it was now my main object to discover. I trusted, however, greatly to the ingenuity and wit of my *confidant*, and a little to my own. It was a corner house—large, rambling, old-fashioned; one side of the house ran down a dark and narrow street, the other faced a broad and public thoroughfare. In walking to and fro the former street, I at length saw a sudden light in a window of the second floor, and Julia herself—yes, herself! appeared for one moment at the window. I recognized her gentle profile—her parted hair—and then she drew down the curtain; all was darkness and a blank. That, then, was her apartment; at least I had some right to conjecture so. How to gain it was still the question. Rope-ladders exist only in romances; besides, the policemen and the passengers. The maid servant flashed across me—might she not, bought over to the minor indulgence, be purchased also to the greater one? I called my servant, and bade him attempt the task. After a little deliberation he rang at the bell—luck favoured me—the same servant as before answered the summons. I remained at a distance, shrouded in my cloak. At length the door closed—Louis joined me—the servant had consented to admit me two hours hence; I might then see Julia undetected. The girl, according to Louis, was more won over by compassion for Julia's distress, whom she imagined *compelled* by her sister to reject the addresses of a true lover, than even by the bribe. In two hours the sister would have retired to rest—the house would be still! Oh, heaven! what a variety of burning emotions worked upon me—and stifled remorse, nay, even fear. Lest we should attract observation, by lingering for so long a time about the spot, I retired from the place at present. I returned at the appointed hour. I was admitted—all was dark—the servant, who was a very young girl herself, conducted me up the narrow stairs. We came to Julia's door—a light broke through the chinks and under the threshold; and now, for the first time, I faltered, I

trembled, the colour fled my cheeks, my knees knocked together. By a violent effort I conquered my emotion. What was to be done? If I entered without premeditation, Julia, in her sudden alarm, might rouse the house; if I sent in the servant to acknowledge that I was there, she might yet refuse to see me—No! this one interview I would insist upon! This latter course was the best, the only one. I bade the girl then prepare her young mistress for my presence. She entered and shut the door; I sat down at the threshold. Conceive all I felt as I sat there listening to the loud beating of my own heart! The girl did not come out—time passed—I heard Julia's voice within, and there seemed fear, agony, in its tone. I could wait no more. I opened her door gently, and stood before her. The fire burnt low and clear in the grate—one candle assisted its partial light; there was a visible air of purity—of maidenhood about the whole apartment that struck an instant reverence into my heart. Books in small shelves hung upon the wall; Julia's work lay upon a table near the fire; the bed stood at a little distance with its white simple drapery;—in all was that quiet and spotless neatness which is as a type of the inmate's mind. My eye took the whole scene at a glance. And Julia herself—reclined on a chair—her head buried in her hands—sobbing violently—and the maid pale and terrified before her, having lost all presence of mind, all attempt to cheer her mistress, much less to persuade! I threw myself at Julia's feet, and attempted to seize her hand; she started up with a faint cry of terror.

"You!" she said, with keen reproach. "I did not expect this from you! Go—go! What would you have? What could you think of me—at this hour—in this room?" and as she said the last words, she again hid her face with her hands, but only for a moment. "Go!" she exclaimed, in a sterner voice. "Go instantly, or——"

"Or what, Julia! You will raise the house?—Do so! In the face of all—foes or friends—I will demand the right to see and speak with you—this night, and alone. Now, summon the house. In the name of indomitable Love I swear that I will be heard."

Julia only waved her hand in yet stronger agitation than before.

"What do you fear?" I resumed, in a softer whisper.

E E

"Is it *I*?—*I* who, for your sake, gave up even the attempt to see you till now. And *now*, what brings me hither? A selfish purpose? No! it is for *your* happiness that I come. Julia, I fancied you well—at ease—forgetting me; and I bore my own wretchedness without a murmur. I heard of you ill, pining—living only on the past; I forgot all prudence, and I am here. Now do you blame, or do you yet imagine that this love is of a nature which you have cause to fear? Answer me, Julia!"

"I cannot—I cannot—here!—and now!—go, I implore you, and to-morrow I will see you."

"This night, or never," said I, rising and folding my arms.

Julia turned round, gazing on my face with so anxious, so inquiring, so alarmed a look, that it checked my growing courage; then turning to the servant she grasped her firmly by the arm, and muttered, "*You* will not leave me!"

"Julia, have I deserved this? Be yourself, and be just to me."

"Not here, I say; not here," cried Julia, in so vehement a tone, that I feared it might alarm the house.

"Hush, hush! Well, then," said I, "come down stairs; doubtless the sitting-room below is vacant enough; there, then, let me see you only for a few minutes, and I will leave you contented, and blessing your name."

"I will," said Julia, gaspingly. "Go, I will follow you."

"Promise!"

"Yes, yes; I promise!"

"Enough; I am satisfied."

Once more I descended the stairs, and sat myself quietly on the last step. I did not wait many moments. Shading the light with her hand, Julia stole down, opened a door in the passage. We were in a little parlour;—the gaping servant was about also to enter; I whispered her to stay without. Julia did not seem to observe or to heed this. Perhaps in this apartment—connected with all the associations of daylight and safety—she felt herself secure. She appeared, too, to look round the little room with a satisfied air, and her face, though very pale, had lost its aspect of fear.

The room was cold, and looked desolate enough, God knows;—the furniture all disarranged and scattered, the

tables strewed with litter, the rug turned up, the ashes in the grate. But Julia here suffered me to take her hand,—and Julia here leant upon my bosom, and I kissed away the tears from her eyes, and she confessed she had been very, very unhappy.

Then with all the power that Love gives us over the one beloved—that soft despotism which melts away the will—I urged my suit to Julia, and implored her to let us become the world to each other. And Julia had yet the virtue to refuse; and her frank simplicity had already half restored my own better angel to myself, when I heard a slight alarmed scream from the servant without—an angry voice—the door opened;—I saw a female whom I was at no loss to conjecture must be Julia's sister. What a picture it made! The good lady with her *bonnet de nuit*, and her—but, alas! the story is too serious for jest; yet imagine how the small things of life interfere with its great events: the widow had come down to look for her keys that she had left behind. The pathetic—the passionate—all marred by a bunch of keys! She looked hard at me before she even deigned to regard my companion; and then, approaching us, she took Julia roughly enough by the arm.

“Go up stairs; go!” she said. “How have you deceived me! And you, sir; what do you do here? Who are you?”

“My dear lady, take a chair, and let us have some rational conversation.”

“Sir, do you mean to insult me?”

“How can you imagine I do?”

“Leave the house this instant, or I shall order in the Policeman!”

“Not you!”

“How!—Will I not?”

Julia, glad of an escape, had already glided from the room.

“Madam,” said I, “listen to me. I will not leave this apartment until I have exonerated your sister from all blame in this interview. I entered the house unknown to her. I went at once to her own room—you start: it was so; I speak the truth. I insisted on speaking to her, as I insist on speaking to you now; and, if you will not hear me, know the result: it is this—I will visit this house, guard it as you can:—day and night I will visit it, until it hold Julia

no more,—until she is mine! Is this the language of a man whom you can control? Come, be seated, and hear me."

The mistress of the house mechanically took a chair. We conversed together for more than an hour. And I found that Julia had been courted the year before by a man in excellent circumstances, of her own age, and her own station in life! that she had once appeared disposed to favour his suit, and that, since she had known me, she had rejected it. The sister was very anxious she should now accept it. She appealed to me whether I should persevere in a suit that could not end honourably to Julia—to the exclusion of one that would secure to her affluence, respectability—a station, and a home. I was struck by this appeal. The widow was, like most of her class, a shrewd and worldly woman enough: she followed up the advantage she had gained; and at length, emboldened by my silence, and depending greatly on my evident passion for Julia, she threw out a pretty broad hint that the only way to finish the dispute fairly was to marry Julia myself. Now, if there be any propensity common to a sensible man of the world, it is suspicion. I immediately suspected that I was to be "*taken in!*" Could Julia connive at this? Had her reserve so great, yet her love so acknowledged, been lures to fascinate me into the snare? I did not yield to the suspicion, but, somehow or other, it remained half unconsciously on my mind. So great was my love for Julia that, had it been less *suddenly* formed, I might have sacrificed all, and married her; but in sudden passions there is *no esteem*. You are ashamed, you are afraid of indulging them to their full extent;—you feel that as yet you are the dupe, if not of others, at least of your own senses, and the very knowledge of the excess of your passion puts you on your guard lest you should be betrayed by it. I said nothing in answer to the widow's suggestion, but I suffered her to suppose from my manner that it *might* have its effect. I left the house, after an amicable compromise. On my part I engaged not to address Julia herself any more. On the widow's part she promised that, on applying to *her*, she would suffer me at any time to see Julia, even alone.

For the next two days I held a sharp contest with myself. Could I, with love still burning in every vein, consent to renounce Julia? Yet could I consent to deprive her of the

holy and respected station she had it in her power to hold, to pursue my suit, to accomplish its purpose in her degradation? A third choice was left me: should I obey the sister's hint, and proffer marriage?—Marriage with one beautiful, indeed, simple, amiable, but without birth, education; without sympathy with myself in a single thought or habit?—be the fool of my own desire, and purchase what I had the sense to feel must be a discontented and ill-mated life, for the mere worship of external qualities? Yet, yet—in a word, I felt as if I could arrive at no decision for myself. I remembered an old friend and adviser of my youth,—to him, then, I resolved to apply for counsel.

John Mannering is about sixty years of age; he is of a mild temper, of great experience, of kindly manners, and of a morality which professes to be practicable rather than strict. He had guided me from many errors in the earlier part of my life, but he had impressed no clear principle on my mind in order to guide myself. His own virtue was without system, the result of a good heart, though not an ardent one; and a mind which did not aspire beyond a certain elevation,—not from the want of a clear sense, but of enthusiasm. Such as he was, he was the best adviser I knew of; for he was among the few who can sympathise with your feelings as well as your interests. With him I conversed long and freely. His advice was obvious—to renounce Julia. I went home; I reasoned with myself; I sat down and began twenty letters; I tore them all in a rage. I could not help picturing to my mind Julia pining and in despair; and, in affecting to myself to feel only for her, I compassionated my own situation. At length Love prevailed over all. I resolved to call on the widow, to request permission to be allowed to visit Julia at her house, and, without promising marriage, still to pay her honourable courtship, with a view of ascertaining if our tempers and dispositions were as congenial as our hearts. I fancied such a proposition seemed exceedingly reasonable and *common-sense-like*. I shut my eyes to the consequences, and, knowing how malleable is the nature of women in youth, I pleased myself with that notion which has deceived so many visionaries, that I should be able to perfect her education, and that, after a few years travel on the Continent, I might feel as proud of her mind as I was now transported with her person. Meanwhile, how tempting was the compro-

mise with my feelings! I should see her!—converse with her!—live in the atmosphere of her presence!

The next day I called on the sister, whose dark, shrewd eye sparkled at my proposition. All was arranged! I saw Julia! What delight beamed in her face! With what smiles and tears she threw herself in my arms! I was satisfied and happy!

And now I called every day, and every day saw Julia: but after the first interview, the charm was broken! I saw with new eyes! The sister, commercial to the backbone of her soul, was delighted, indeed, at the thought of the step in life her sister was to make. Julia was evidently impressed by the widow's joy, and visions of splendour evidently mingled with those of love. What more natural? Love, perhaps, predominated over all; but was it possible that, in a young and imaginative mind, the worldly vanities should be wholly dormant? Yet it was natural, also, that my suspicion should be roused,—that I should fear I was deceived,—that I might have been designedly led on to this step,—that what had seemed nature in Julia was in reality art!

I looked in her face, and its sunny and beautiful candour reassured me—but the moment afterwards the thought forced itself upon me again—I recalled also the instances I had ever known of unequal marriages, and I fancied I saw unhappiness in all—it seemed to me, in all, that the superior had been palpably duped. Thus a coldness insensibly crept over the wonted ardour of my manner, and instead of that blessed thoughtlessness, that Elysian credulity, with which lovers should give themselves up to the transport of the hour, and imagine that each is the centre of all perfection, I became restless and vigilant—for ever sifting motives, and diving deeper than the sweet surface of the present time. My mind thus influenced—the delusion that conceals all faults and uncongenialities gradually evaporated—I noted a thousand things in Julia that made me start at the notion of seeing her become my wife. So long as marriage had not entered into my views—so long those faults had not touched me—had passed unheeded;—I saw her now with other eyes. When I sought in her love and beauty alone, I was contented to ask no more. At present I sought more; she was to become the companion of a life, and I was alarmed—nay, I even exaggerated the petty

causes of my displeasure ; an inelegance of expression—a negligence of conventional forms—fretted and irritated me in her far more than they would have done in one of my own station. When love first becomes reasonable it soon afterwards grows unjust. I did not scruple to communicate to Julia all the little occurrences of the day, or little points in her manner, that had annoyed me ;—and I found that she did not take my suggestions, mild and guarded as they were, in a manner I thought I had a right to expect. She had been accustomed to see me enamoured of her lightest word or gesture—she was not prepared to find me now cavilling and reproving ;—her face, always ingenuous, evinced at once her mortification at the change. She thought me always in the wrong, wearisome, exacting, and unjust. She never openly resented at first—merely pouted out her pretty lip and was silent for the next half hour ; but, by degrees, my beautiful Julia began to evince traces of a “spirit”—a spirit not indeed unfeminine, and never loud—a spirit of sorrow rather than anger. I was ungenerous (she said)—I had never found these faults before—I had never required all this perfection—and then she wept :—and that went to my heart ; and I was not satisfied with myself till she smiled again. But it was easy to perceive that from taking pleasure in each other’s society we grew by degrees to find embarrassment ;—the fear of a quarrel, discontent, and a certain pain supplying the place of eager and all absorbing rapture ; and when I looked to the future I trembled. In a word—I repeat once more—“THE CHARM WAS GONE!”

Oh, epoch in the history of human passions !—when that phrase is spoken—what volumes does it not convey !—what bitter, what irremediable disappointment !—what dread conviction of the fallacy of hope, and the false colouring of imagination !—what a chill and dark transition—from life as we fancied it, to life as it is !—In the Arabian tale, when one eye was touched with the mystic ointment, all the treasures of the earth became visible, and the sterile rock was transformed into mines of inexhaustible wealth ; but when the same spell is extended to both eyes the delusion vanishes—the earth relapses into its ancient barrenness—and the mine fades once more into the desert ;—so in the experience of the passions—while we are as yet but partially the creatures of the enchantment, we are blessed

with a power to discovery glory in all things;—we are as magicians—we are as gods!—we are not contented—we demand more—custom touches *both* eyes—and, lo! the vision is departed, and we are alone in the wilderness again!

One evening after one of our usual quarrels and reconciliations, Julia's spirits seemed raised into more than usual reaction. There were three or four of her friends present—a sort of party—her cousins (the fortune-seekers) among the rest—and she was the life of the circle. In proportion to her gaiety was my discontent; I fancied she combined with the confounded widow, who evidently wanted to “show me off,” in her own damnable phrase, as her sister's wooer; and this is a position in which no tolerably fastidious man likes to be placed: add to this, my readers very well know that people who have no inelegance when subdued, throw off a thousand little *grossiérities* when they are elated. No ordeal is harder for a young and lovely woman, who has not been brought up *conventionally*, to pass with grace, than that of her own unrestrained merriment. Levity requires polish in proportion to your interest in the person who indulges it; and levity in his mistress is almost always displeasing to a passionate lover. Love is so very grave and so very refined a deity. In short every instant added to my secret vexation. I absolutely coloured with rage at every jest bandied between poor Julia and her companions. I swear I think I could have beat her, with a safe conscience. The party went; now came my turn. I remonstrated—Julia replied—we both lost our temper. I fancied then I was entirely in the right; but now, alas! I will believe myself wrong; it is some sacrifice to a dread memory to own it.

“You always repine at my happiness,” said Julia; “to be merry is always in your eyes a crime; I cannot bear this tyranny; I am not your wife, and if I were, I would not bear it. If I displease you now, what shall I do hereafter?”

“But, my dear Julia, you can so easily avoid the little peculiarities I dislike. Believe me unreasonable—perhaps I am so. It is some pleasure to a generous mind to sacrifice to the unreasonableness of one we love. In a word, I own it frankly, if you meet all my wishes with this obstinacy, we cannot be happy, and—and——”

"I see," interrupted Julia, with unwonted vehemence, "I see what you would say; you are tired of me; you feel that I do not suit your ideal notions. You thought me all perfect when you designed me for your victim: but now that you think something is to be sacrificed on *your* part, you think only of that paltry sacrifice, and demand of me an impossible perfection in return!"

There was so much truth in this reproach that it stung me to the quick. It was indelicate, perhaps, in Julia to use it—it was certainly unwise.

I turned pale with anger.

"Madam," I began, with that courtesy which conveys all reproach.

"Madam!" repeated Julia, turning suddenly round—her lips parted—her eyes flashing through her tears—alarm—grief—but also indignation quivering in every muscle—"Is it come to this?—Go!—Let us part—my love ceases since I see yours is over! Were you twice as wealthy—twice as proud—I would not humble myself to be beholden to your justice instead of your affection.—Rather—rather—oh, God!—rather would I have sacrificed myself—given up all to you—than accept one advantage from the man who considers it an honour.—Let us part."

Julia had evidently conceived the word I had used in cold and bitter respect, as an irony on her situation as well as a proof of coldness; but I did not stop to consider whether or not she was reasonably provoked; her disdain for the sacrifice I thought so great, galled me—the violence of her passion revolted. I thought only of the escape she offered me—"Let us part"—rang in my ear like a reprieve to a convict. I rose at once—took my hat calmly—and not till I reached the door did I reply.

"Enough, Julia—we part for ever. You will hear from me to-morrow for the last time!"

I left the house and trod as on air. My love for Julia long decreasing seemed crushed at once. I imagined her former gentleness all hypocrisy;—I thought only of the termagant I had escaped. I congratulated myself that she having broke the chain I was free and with honour. I did not then—no—nor till it was too late—recall the despair printed on her hueless face, when the calm low voice of my resolution broke upon her ear, and she saw that she had indeed lost me for ever. That image rises before me now:

it will haunt me to my grave. Her features pale and locked—the pride, the resentment, all sunk,—merged in one incredulous, wild, stony aspect of deserted love. Alas!—alas!—could I but have believed that she felt so deeply! I wrote to her the next day kindly and temperately, but such a tone made the wound deeper—I bade her farewell for ever. To her sister I wrote more fully. I said that our tempers were so thoroughly unsuited, that no rational hope of happiness in our union could exist for either. I besought her not to persuade or induce her sister to marry the suitor, who had formerly addressed her, unless she could return his affection. Whomsoever she married, her fortune should be my care. Doubtless in a little time some one would be to her as dear as I once had fancied myself to be. “Let,” I said, “no disparity in fortune, then, be an obstacle on either side; I will cheerfully give up half my own to redeem whatever affliction I may have occasioned her.” With this letter I entirely satisfied my conscience.

It is almost incredible to think in how short a time the whole of these events had been crowded—within how few weeks I have concentrated the whole history of Love!—its first mysterious sentiment—its ardent passion—its dissension—its coolness—its breach—its everlasting farewell!

In four days I received a letter from Julia’s sister—(none from Julia). It was written in a tone of pert and flippant insolence, which made me more than ever reconciled to the turn of events; but it contained one piece of news I did not hear with indifference,—Julia had accepted the offer of her former suitor, and was to be married next week. “She bids me say (wrote the widow) that she sees at once through your pretence, under an affected wish for her happiness, to prevent her forming this respectable connexion;—she sees that you still assume the right to dictate to her, and that your offers of generosity are merely the condescensions of a fancied superiority;—she assures you, however, that your wish for her happiness is already realized.”

This undeserved and insulting message completed my conquest over any lurking remorse or regret; and I did not, in my resentment at Julia’s injustice, perceive how much it was the operation of a wounded vanity upon a despairing heart.

I still lingered in town; and some days afterwards, I

went to dine in the neighbourhood of Westminster, at the house of one of the most jovial of boon companions. I had for some weeks avoided society : the temporary cessation gave a new edge to my zest for its pleasures. The hours flew rapidly,—my spirits rose,—and I enjoyed the present with a gusto that had been long denied to me.

On leaving the house on foot, the fineness of the night, with its frosty air and clear stars, tempted me to turn from my direct way homeward, and I wandered mechanically towards a scene which has always possessed to me, at night, a great attraction, viz.—the bridge which divides the suburb from the very focus of the capital, with its proud Abbey and gloomy Senate! I walked to and fro the bridge,—gazing at times on the dark waters, reflecting the lights from the half-seen houses and the stars of the solemn Heavens. My mind was filled with shadowy and vague presentiments : I felt awed and saddened, without a palpable cause; the late excitement of my spirits was succeeded by a melancholy re-action. I mused over the various disappointments of my life, and the Ixion-like delusion with which I had so often wooed a deity and clasped a cloud. My history with Julia made a principal part of these meditations; her image returned to me irresistibly, and with renewed charms. In vain I endeavoured to recur to the feelings of self-acquittal and gratulation, which a few hours ago had actuated me; my heart was softened, and my memory refused to recall all harsher retrospection—her love, her innocence only obtruded themselves upon me, and I sighed to think that perhaps by this time she was irrevocably another's. I retraced my steps, and was now at the end of the bridge, when, just by the stairs, I perceived a crowd, and heard a vague and gathering clamour. A secret impulse hurried me to the place : I heard a policeman speaking with the eagerness which characterizes the excitement of narration.

“My suspicions were aroused,” quoth he, “as I passed, and saw a female standing by the bridge. So, you see, I kept loitering there, and a minute after I went gently up, and I heard the young woman groan; and she turned round as I came up, for I frightened her; and I never shall forget her face,—it was so woe-begone,—and yet she was so young and handsome. And so, you see, I spoke to her, and I said, says I, ‘Young woman, what do you do here at

this hour?' And she said, 'I am waiting for a boat: I expect my mother from Richmond.' And, somehow or other, I was foolish enough to believe what she said—she looked so quiet and respectable like;—and I went away, you, understand; and in about a minute after (for I kept near the spot) I heard a heavy splash in the water, and then I knew what it all was. I ran up, and I just saw her once rise; and so, as I could not swim, I gave the alarm, and we got the boat—but it was too late."

"Poor girl!" lisped an old coster-woman; "I dare say she was crossed in love."

"What is this?" said I, mixing with the crowd.

"A young woman as has drowned herself, Sir."

"Where? I do not see the body."

"It be taken to the watch-house, and the doctors are trying to recover it."

A horrible idea had crossed my mind;—unfounded, improbable as it seemed, I felt as if compelled to confirm or remove it. I made the policeman go with me to the watch-house;—I pushed away the crowd—I approached the body. Oh, God!—that white face—the heavy, dripping hair—the swollen form—and all that decent and maiden beauty, with the coarse cover half thrown over it!—and the unsympathizing surgeons standing by! and the unfamiliar faces of the women!—What a scene!—what a death-bed! Julia, Julia! thou art avenged!

It was her, then, whom I beheld; her—the victim—the self-destroyer. I hurry over the awful record. I am writing my own condemnation—stamping my own curse. They found upon the corpse a letter: drenched as it was, I yet could decipher its characters;—it was to me. It ran thus:—

"I believe now that I have been much to blame; for I am writing calmly, with a fixed determination not to live; and I see how much I have thrown away the love you once gave me. Yet I have loved you always,—how dearly, I never told you, and never can tell! But when you seemed to think so much of your—what shall I say?—your condescension in marrying—perhaps loving—me, it maddened me to the brain; and though I would have given worlds to please you, I could not bear to see the difference in your manner, after you came to see me daily, and to think of me as a woman ought to be thought of; and this, I know,

made me seem cross, and peevish, and unamiable,—but I could not help it,—and so you ceased to love me; and I felt that, and longed madly to release you from a tie you repented. The moment came for me to do so, and—we parted. Then you wrote to me, and my sister made me see in the letter what, perhaps, you did not intend; but, indeed, I was only sensible to the thought that I had lost you for ever, and that you scorned me. And then my vanity was roused,—and I knew you still loved me,—and I fancied I could revenge myself upon you by marrying another. But when I came to see, and meet, and smile upon that other,—and to feel the day approach,—and to reflect that *you* had been all in all to me,—and that I was about to pass my whole life with one I loathed, after having loved so well and so entirely,—I felt I had reckoned too much on my own strength, and that I could not sustain my courage any longer. Nothing is left to me in life: the anguish I suffer is intolerable; and I have at length made up my mind to die. But think not I am a poor love-sick girl only. I am more;—I am still a revengeful woman. You have deserted me, and I know myself to blame; but I cannot bear that you should forget and despise me, as you would if I were to marry. I am about to force you to remember me for ever,—to be sorry for me—to forgive me—to love me better than you have done yet, even when you loved me most. It is in this that I shall be revenged!”

And with this wild turmoil of contending feelings,—the pride of womanhood wrestling with the softness—forgiveness with revenge—high emotions with erring principles—agony, led on to death by one hope to be remembered and deplored;—with this contest at thy heart didst thou go down to thy watery grave!

What must have passed within thee in those brief and terrible moments, when thou stoodest by the dark waters, hesitating—lingering—fearing—yet resolved! And I was near thee in that hour, and knew thee not—at hand, and saved not! Oh! bitter was the revenge—lasting is the remembrance! Henceforth, I ask no more of Human Affections: I stand alone on the Earth!

THE END.

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